COMMON GROUND

Project for the Post-2020 City:
Remaking the Ground Floor

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/\ CCA ARCHITECTURE / THE URBAN WORKS AGENCY \

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Introduction

Case Studies

Projects

Japantown

In front of the empty Mission De Flores.
Walking Tour in Excelsior. 2021.
Photo by Urban Works Agency

Re-Writing the City

Introduction to the
Common Ground Studio

Christopher Roach & Julia Grinkrug
Studio Professors

"We need a new spatial contract. In the context of widening political divides and growing economic inequalities, we call on architects to imagine spaces in which we can generously live together"
- Hashim Sarkis[1]

The rain was biblical. We stood on an outer Mission Street sidewalk in front of the empty *Mission de Flores* storefront, crowded under the awning or huddled beneath shared umbrellas, the backs of our legs getting soaked from the torrential downpour, as we strained to hear the voices of our guides through the noise of the storm and the din of passing city busses. Shoulder to shoulder, a tight semicircle of bodies formed an impromptu theater as we listened intently to the narratives of people and place that weave the life of a neighborhood into the warp and weft of urban spaces, and our own thread began to unspool and wind its way through the soggy streets of the city and into the fabric of this newly unfamiliar physical world.

The rain marked the end (or so we thought) not only of a chronic drought, but also a year of two-dimensional being - working and learning from our little domestic lifeboats and only aware of the existence of others as mediated ghosts on a screen. We emerged from this spiritual drought into a deluge of corporeal presence, a direct aesthetic experience of the real that shocked us out of our

dreamlike state, and began our journey back into the world of the living, breathing metropolis. With our bodies liberated from their protective shelter, but also newly vulnerable and tentatively clustering into fragile new spheres of propinquity, we set out to feel our way across this defamiliarized terrain, and begin re-writing the codes of commonality into the ground of the city.

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed our relationship to the city in everyday life and practice. The reconfigured protocols of social interaction unveiled paradoxical overlaps and fluid boundaries between the domestic and urban realms, work and leisure, private and public. This fluidity loosened up some of the traditional divides, but at the same time has exposed the deep and enduring systemic inequities which are unforgivingly represented in the organization of the city's ground floor. This book reviews the outcomes of an urban design research studio conducted over a span of two academic years, which analyzed the contested ground of the city both as a problem and as an opportunity.

The design research initiated in the "Apocalypse Now" studio in the Spring of 2020 didn't end with the final review, but transitioned to ongoing collaborations with civic partners. The year of pandemic was a reality check for our supposedly progressive society. It revealed deep and entrenched inequalities, which were brought to the frontlines of public attention during the summer of social unrest that followed the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by the hands of police. The calls for reparations and social justice urged the need for reckoning with structural racism that underlies our capitalist democracy. In response to this historical and political moment, we were compelled to re-address the studio topic through equity and justice framework.

Viewed through this framework, the issue of the "ground floor" ceased being merely an architectural subject, but appeared as a confluence of complex and ever-changing socio-economic, political, and cultural factors - a manifestation of a broader systemic and societal condition. Unpacking some of the fundamental notions of property and ownership, resource distribution and economic flows, forms of governance, care, and stewardship, this studio centered on the importance of civic agency and community organization of land as the generative engines of structural change. Under this premise, the studio was formulated as a community research collective, in which the community partners play a leading role, defining the terms and conditions for the project, and being equal authors of the curriculum rather than a passive research subject.
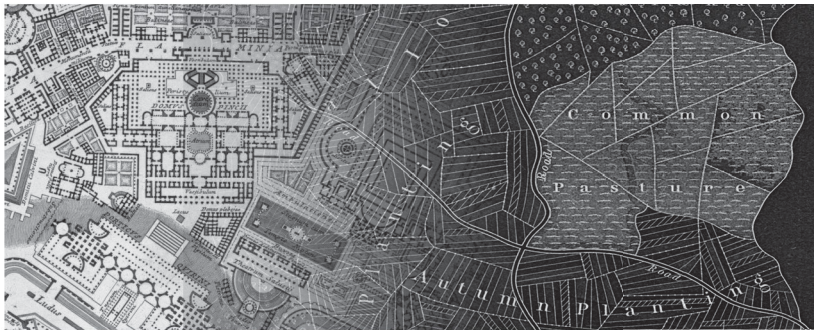
The Common Ground Studio

The advanced urban studio *Common Ground: Re-Making the Ground Floor* investigated the figure-ground relationships in the post-pandemic city and explored strategies for reclaiming the urban commons from within the crisis of the neoliberal city. This studio continued a series of explorations on the agency of the public realm in claiming the urbanites' right to the city, following its previous iteration in Spring 2020 titled *Apocalypse Now! – Project for the Post-Retail City*. The studio was situated within the larger discourse on catalyzing the commons, fostered by the Urban Works Agency at California College of the Arts, as featured in its recent series *Reclaiming Land: Decommodifying Property Towards Social and Racial Justice*.

This second studio in the series centered on the role of *social infrastructure*[1] in building a more just, inclusive, and thriving city. It followed the premise that social infrastructure, produced on the city's ground floor, is a public good that should not rely solely on market forces to serve the community, providing its physical, social, and organizational frameworks. This approach compelled us to rethink the fundamental notions of property and ownership, forms of governance and stewardship, as well as their spatial boundaries and the physical configurations of the ground floor itself. Beyond the dialectics of private and public, industry and academia, the studio focused on the importance of civic agency and community organization of land as the generative power for structural change in the re-awakening society.

The focus on the ground floor was driven by an interest in seeing urbanism not merely as a collection of buildings, but as a field of relationships among systems, spatial conditions, programs, and inhabitants. This approach allowed us to envision the city as a more holistic and collective design project. The previous iteration of the studio (Spring 2020), examined the Retail Apocalypse as an alibi for re-thinking the ground floor of the city. In the current political context, the studio shifted to re-examine the ground floor and its relationship to social infrastructure through an equity and justice framework. Echoing Hashim Sarkis's articulation of the "*spatial contract*" in his curatorial statement for the *Venice Biennale 2021*, this studio investigated the professional efficacy of architecture not only in space-making but also in forming human relationships. Grounding the design in real-world situations, the *Common Ground* studio joined forces with grassroots community organizations who fight for social justice on the ground through their lived experience.

[1] As defined by Eric Klinenberg in his 2018 book *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life.*

Commons and Commoning:

The *Common Ground* studio addresses the intricate interplay of *property* and *commons* as the cornerstone of contemporary urban politics. Through this lens, *commoning* can be seen as an agonistic practice whereby the "*community organization of land*" asserts an alternative to the organization of land by the market or the state. While the theory of the commons is still emergent, communities and collectives around the world are already enacting them by defining unique forms of co-ownership and co-governance. Prof. Sheila Forster describes these experiments as *Co-Cities*, joining other contemporary scholars of the commons such as Stavros Stavrides and Stephan Gruber.

Ground and Grounding:

Our focus on the *ground floor* is driven by an interest in seeing urbanism not as merely a collection of buildings, but as a field of relationships among systems, spatial conditions, programs, and inhabitants. The ground floor itself is thus conceived as an urban entity or system in its own right, both an object of inquiry and subject of creative and collective activity and work. Cutting a conceptual horizontal slice through the city and peering into the ground floor allows us to investigate these relationships at a scale beyond architecture and its boundaries, and to engage with the city as a more holistic and collective design project.

Ideo-Logics

The ambition of the studio was to envision an ideological project, where the *state of exception* formed under the pandemic could be seen both as an opportunity to rethink current models of property and land tenure and their relationship to the public sphere, and as an alibi to question contemporary preconceptions in urban

Image: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Campo Marzio (detail), 1762 | William R. Shepherd, Plan of a fictional medieval manor, 1923[2]

[2] We started our studio *Common Ground : Re-Making the Ground Floor*, with this image that mashed up a fictional representation of the commons in medieval Britain with another iconic fictional representation of Ancient Rome, made by Piranesi in the 18th century. The former image represents an existence of a shared resource within the otherwise highly individualistic feudal system, and the latter shows a continuous flow of public realm in the hyperurbanism of the Empire's capital. This mashup illustrates our aspiration for this studio to explore a potential confluence of worldviews. One, which is the paradigm of the neoliberal city, that thrives on competition and power, leading to gentrification and displacement, and the other of the city of commons - an idealist vision of the city governed by shared and restorative economics, based on cooperation, trust and mutual support.

planning and real estate that have shaped the footprint of the modern city. The studio investigated how this *state of exception* could be transformed into a "*state of (radical)acceptance*," and current temporary and experimental practices, spaces, and social relations could be extended and codified into alternatives to the neoliberal city. According to one of the studio partners, in order to become sustainable, any urban intervention must strive for radical "intersectional coordination" across agencies, groups, developers, and activists.[3]

This studio called upon its participants to interrogate the efficacy of architecture in fostering systemic change that redefines the fundamental relationships between the city and its citizens. Within this framework and in alignment with the CCA annual theme of "*RE-MAKING…*", the students developed a series of *counter-proposals* to the normative urban conditions of the ground floor, envisioning formal and programmatic "hacks" that can be made manifest in both physical space and lived reality as a "*city in the city*." Projecting the underlying principles of the commons onto the foreground of the existing fabric, the students proposed new *ideo-logics* (using Alan Altshuler's term[4]) for the organization and management of land, flow of goods and people, construction of spatial types and systems, and the emergence of novel architectural typologies.

Hardware, Software, + Orgware

For both the case studies and site analysis, we conducted a holistic analysis of urban systems by looking beyond the transactional rationale of market-driven development, while tapping into the complex intricacies of cultural, political, and socio-economic dynamics behind it. To engage in this task, we analyzed each case study and conducted initial site analysis through **3 distinct lenses** of *hardware*, *software*, and *orgware* (as defined in Antje's Steinmuller's course *Framing the Commons* and in Act(ivat)or's Toolbox[5]). According to Steinmuller definitions: "_Hardware_ components include the physical/spatial aspects of the case study in question, while _software_ indicates uses and users, and _orgware_ encompasses the rules and relationships that are needed to govern and steward the resources included in it."

Social Infrastructure

We focused our inquiry into the civic function of the ground floor of the city, which has been traditionally dedicated to retail and governed by market forces, but the triple crisis of 2020 called for a fundamental reconsideration. In particular, we were interested in how the ground floor of the city produces, supports, and relies on *social infrastructure*, defined by Klinenberg as "the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact…[and] the physical conditions

[3] A reference to a comment by Ms. Margaret Gordon, a legendary environmental justice activist in West Oakland, who has been leading a decades long fight for public health and community benefits in her neighborhood and beyond.
[4] Altshuler, Alan. "The Ideologies of Urban Land Use Politics". *Land Lines,* Newsletter of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy November 1996 Volume 8 • Number 6.
[5] Steinmuller, Antje. "The Act(ivat)or's Toolbox: Expanded Roles, Actions, and Parameters in the Production of the Urban Commons". 104th Annual ACSA Meeting. *Shaping New Knowledges.* 2016.
[6] Klinenberg, Eric. *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life.* Crown, 2018.

that determine whether social capital develops."[6] In particular, we investigated and experimented with how these social infrastructures can become the sites and catalysts for a city of commons.

Social Infrastructure Investment Districts (SIIDs)

While we attempted to give our students a crash course in urban planning concepts and a basic understanding of property, land use, regulation, governance, finance, and development, the breakneck pace of a 14-week urban design studio did not provide them with the adequate tools to develop a robust development framework for their projects. Therefore, we developed one for them, based on a theoretical proposal for implementing **Social Infrastructure Investment Districts** in each of their project areas, giving them the agency to propose changes in land use, assembly of property, and channeling of capital to invest in their proposals for new social infrastructures.

In brief, our theoretical proposal for Social Infrastructure Investment Districts is modeled on the financial and regulatory framework embodied in California's Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs), but "hacked" to produce an urban commons on the ground floor. It is built on the premise that the ground floor produces social infrastructure, and that if the old model of ground floor retail everywhere is essentially dead, then we can instead conceive of the entire ground floor of the city as a single, massive social infrastructure. Following this logic, municipalities could designate areas where neighborhood-based organizations (CBOs, CBDS, BIDs, etc.) could create a "social infrastructure financing district", which would follow the logic of more typical infrastructure financing districts, enabling the use of tax increment financing and other financial and regulatory tools to develop that social infrastructure.

The assumption is similar to redevelopment: that investing in social infrastructure on the ground floor of this district, combined with upzoning, will create future value, and tax revenues that can be borrowed against to provide the financing to invest in that social infrastructure today. This process would avoid the "taking" of private property *by trading air rights for "ground rights"*. In other words, if cities can essentially create "new land" out of thin air by zoning parcels to allow property owners to build more (housing, office, etc.), then they could exchange these density bonuses by taking over the rights to the ground floor and deeding it to local entities created as social infrastructure improvement districts (SIIDs - pronounced "seeds").

METHODOLOGY, PROCESS, AND THE CO-LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Case Studies + Site Analysis

During the first few weeks of the semester, the studio investigated a series of case studies of emerging urban commons in order to bring a broader perspective to our local conditions. Six places were selected that exhibit unique conditions or qualities that we could mine as resources to build a compendium of tactics and strategies for rethinking the ground floor of the city, leading to a studio-wide catalog of possible strategies that could be superimposed onto current conditions at a specific series of sites in San Francisco and Oakland. These case studies were selected to represent a broad spectrum of formal, organizational, financial, cultural, and programmatic strategies from both local (located in the United States) and global contexts. The intent was to both provide a wider variety of potential innovation, but also to defamiliarize entrenched decision-making/organizational structures and hierarchies.

Building on the analytical tools and tactics derived from the case studies, the students conducted an urban analysis of the existing and proposed conditions for three study areas associated with our community partners. These study areas represent a range of scales, contexts, and histories. However, all three share to some extent the unfortunate legacy of inconsiderate urban development, leading to disenfranchisement, neglect, or erasure that heavily impacted local communities. In addition, all three are the focus of either current or proposed development plans or rezoning, and thus presented our studio with the opportunity to envision a meaningful change.

Projects

In the end, the output of the studio was based on producing an urban design project in collaboration with the community partners, where current temporary and experimental practices, spaces, and social relations could be extended and codified into alternatives to the neoliberal city. The students developed a series of counter-proposals to the normative urban conditions of the ground floor, envisioning formal and programmatic "hacks" that could be made manifest in both physical space and lived reality as a "city in the city." Projecting the underlying principles of the commons onto the foreground of the existing fabric, the students investigated new ideo-logics for the organization and management of land, flow of goods and people, construction of spatial types and systems, and the emergence of novel architectural typologies. These projects aimed to clarify a series of spatial and programmatic strategies that articulated a new approach to the ground floor. These strategies generated specific

architectural configurations for both the interior and exterior of the ground floor, and in turn, influenced the ways the buildings above meet the ground and formed an overall *gestalt* for new urban form.

Representation

We investigated these emerging urban commons through the disciplinary tools of architecture and urban design, specifically their abstraction through both conventional and novel forms of representation. However, we adopted a critical stance toward representation, and considered the inherent biases, limitations, and forms of agency of various representational types, graphic conventions, and methodologies. This discerning approach informed the selection of a few highly specific and intentional drawing types which were instrumentalized as analytical tools and yield a set of formulas that became the raw material for a synthetic and recombinatory process through which new design models were produced.

Each assignment in this studio focused on a specific drawing / representation type (figure-ground, orthographic projection, diagram, perspective etc.). We discussed these types and the intentionality behind their selection, in terms of their biases, instrumentality, history, technique, and especially their agency; both in terms of representation of subjects, and in terms of the agency of architecture. The intent was to be proscriptive in terms of format and graphic standards in order to both allow a comparative study, but also to highlight the differences among the techniques / types, and how they are effective (or not) in representing the projects. As well, we weaved in conversations about representation through an equity framework, through analysis and an interrogation of who the stakeholders are, who gets to dictate or program the ground floor, who has access, and ultimately, what we want the ground floor of our city to be.

Terminology

In a holistic analysis of urban systems, we delved into the intricacies of cultural, political, and socio-economic dynamics of the city through 6 distinct lenses. (See their definitions on the next page.) These definitions became the key terminology of the studio. The first 3 lenses defined the layers of the city superimposed onto each other in an agonistic interplay. We called them "the three grounds". The next 3 lenses defined urban components acting as catalysts and enablers of emerging urban dynamics. We called them "operational systems."

Common(s)

Within the framework of a highly polarized neoliberal economy, the theory of the commons emerges as an opportunity to imagine alternative sets of relationships that escape the double tyranny of market and state structures. Commons are experimentations in co-ownership and co-governance that are disrupting and reimagining the current status quo, allowing open access to common resources, shared among all citizens.

Private

The regime of private property has arguably been the key mechanism of oppression throughout the history of the United States. Its structures were designed to systematically dispossess the black, indigineous and other people of color from their ability to generate wealth. In the wake of recent rampant gentrification, the domain of private property becomes the key factor for local residents and business owners to resist displacement and assert their right for belonging.

Public

Historically, public space was seen as a symbol for social cohesion and civic expression, a monument to the collective will of a society. However, such notions become questionable once critically assessed. The state of public spaces and public infrastructure often reveals inequitable distribution of public funds, while the use of mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion undermine the democratic premise of public space through the techniques of surveillance, commercialization and even displacement, through eminent domain.
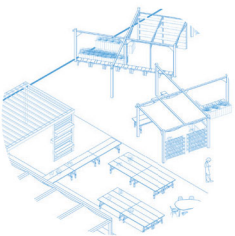
Hardware

Architecture operates in the realm of physical things. Hardware components include the physical/spatial aspects of architectural intervention in the built environment. They are tangible and malleable. As physical objects they implicitly direct, support and facilitate human activity in space.
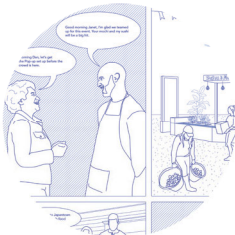
Software

The activity itself is not fully determined by its physical framework and is guaranteed by space activation and programming. It is facilitated by the true actors of the urban drama, who live, work and play in urban spaces. In other words, software indicates uses and users.
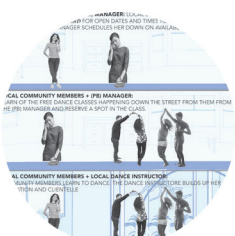
Orgware

Orgware encompasses the rules and relationships that are needed to govern and steward urban spaces. Each spatial arrangement is regulated by multiple invisible layers of orgware, which are embedded in their administrative framework, starting from laws and policies down to hyper local and informal cultural norms and unwritten agreements.

Christopher Roach

Excelsior Action Group

West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project

Japantown Task Force

Julia Grinkrug

David Peters

Neighbors! Join us in an exciting project celebrate the stor our neighborhoo past and prese are developi history walk and need yo

George Turner

Ms Margaret

Maribel Ramirez

Karen Kai

Photos courtesy of Urban Works Agency

Grounds for Co-Creation
Community Partnership and Creative Collaborations

Christopher Roach & Julia Grinkrug
Studio Professors

"Emergence emphasizes critical connections over critical mass, building authentic relationships, listening with all senses of the body and the mind… Emergent Strategy is how we intentionally change in ways that grow our capacity to embody the just and liberated worlds we long for."

- adrienne maree brown[1]

As we re-emerged from the grip of the pandemic seeing many Californians enjoy an apparent return to normalcy, another realization crept up on us from behind the thrill of the relief. It was the realization of the pandemic's aftershocks, invoking a rising wave of socio-economic upheavals. Once again, the media was filled with a familiar refrain, reporting the disproportionate impacts imposed on the black and brown communities. The pandemic revealed with a relentless clarity the chilling persistence of inequality, woven into the legal and economic fabric of American society and cast in the built hard infrastructure of the American cities, exposing once again the enduring presence of the systemic divides that infect all aspects of public life, health and social mobility.

With the renewed urgency to address systemic racism in the urban environment, the *Common Ground* studio took charge in forming partnerships with three community-based organizations in the Bay

[1] brown, adrienne maree, *Emergent Strategy, Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, (2017) AK Press

Workshop 1, Digital Whiteboard

Area with the intent to facilitate a community-led design process where the curriculum objectives and frameworks are co-authored by the instructors and community experts. The studio was deliberate in leveling the hierarchical structures of higher education by centering the voices of the community experts as institutional equals and decentering the authority of the academic, in the aspiration to find the *common ground* in co-creation of an equitable and reciprocal design process.

To achieve this objective we reached out to three community-based organizations across the Bay Area, each driven by a unique and particular mission. Our partners were the Excelsior Action Group (**EAG**), the Japantown Task Force (**JTF**), and the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (**WOEIP**). Although each of these organizations represented communities from diverse geographic locations, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic conditions, all of them were united in their intent to enhance the social infrastructure of their community, to withstand the relentless forces of gentrification and cultural erasure.

Moving at the Speed of Trust

From the outset, shaping the studio around a community-led process was a core value for us. As the studio unfolded, it became evident that this approach was key for grounding the studio in real-life issues by introducing students to actual people, who are battling these issues *on the ground* through their lived experience. However, as we engaged in a dialogue, we realized the barriers that needed to be overcome to establish a trustful relationship in the shadow of the daunting legacies of extractive scientific practices.[2] The practices of consensus - building and community engagement, shared with us by the community organizers, were poignant reminders of how much our own educational system is still entrenched in the hierarchical and competitive mindset of industrial capitalism.

Among the tendencies that eroded community's trust in academic institutions were the following two extremes: the first is a patronistic lens, through which the community is seen as a passive research subject in need of help and pity; the other (a more recent one) is tokenism, in which community partnership provides an appearance of grace and benevolence advancing the academic partner in their position by appropriating the life-long labor of community activists and not benefiniting them in return. Despite the barriers listed above, the organizations who agreed to partner with the studio were passionate about sharing their knowledge and expertise in working towards a common goal of changing the narrative of division and domination towards an imagination of equity and inclusion. Transgressing the boundaries of institutional elitism and professional

[2] Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes the problematic legacies of ethnographic research in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, starting with early colonial examples and showing how "...travelers' tales and other anecdotal ways of representing indigenous peoples have contributed to the general impressions and the milieu of ideas that have informed Western knowledge and Western constructions of the "Other."
[3] hooks, bell, *Teaching To Transgress*, (2014) Routledge.

WEST OAKLAND   WHY?   WHAT+WHO?   HOW?

JAPANTOWN   WHY?   WHAT+WHO?   HOW?

EXCELSIOR   WHY?   WHAT+WHO?   HOW?

Workshop 2
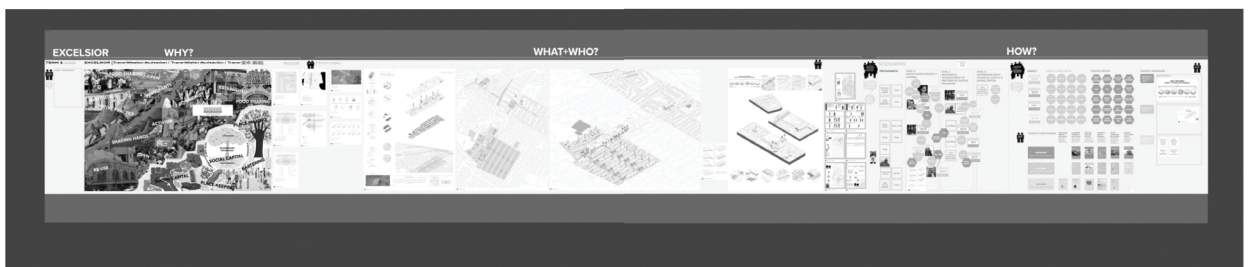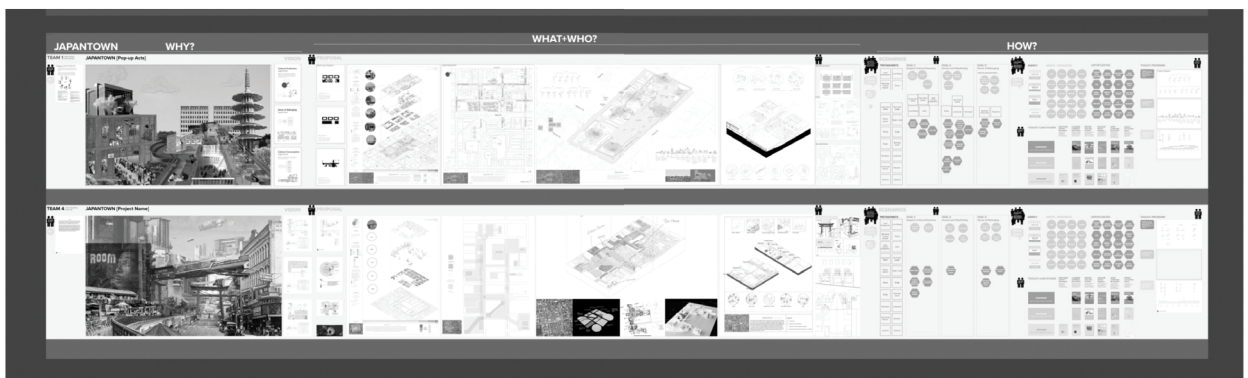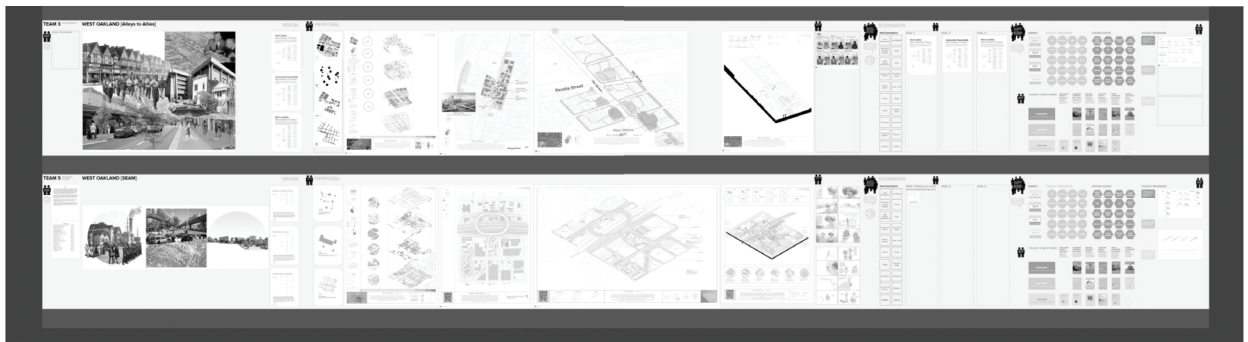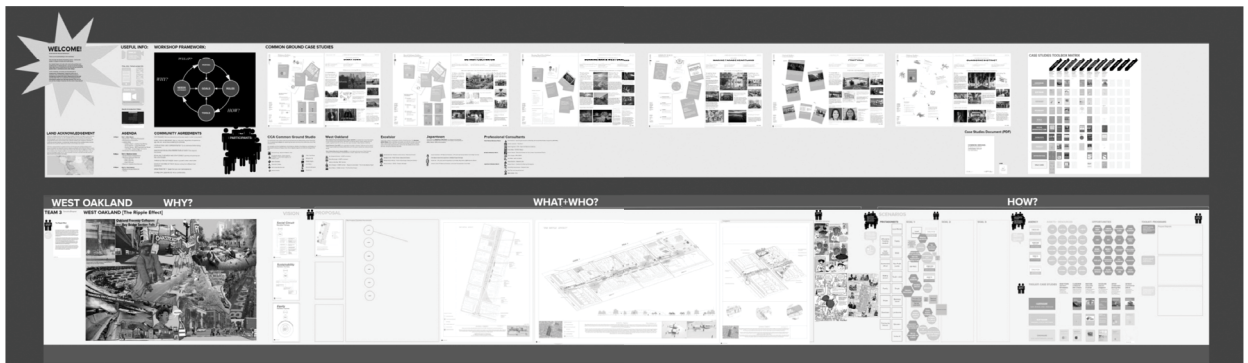
stratification, and engaging in an open dialogue with community organizers and activists, this studio was following bell hooks' call to widen "the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared" - embracing difference while recognizing and negotiating "biases of any kind."[3] Direct interaction between the students and the community decentered the authority of the educators and created an increased sense of accountability and self reflection through relational and unmediated conversations. In this process, the students were urged to identify and assert their own agency, value systems, as well as their aspired role as professionals in a society. This created an immersive and heuristic educational framework for the students, fostering the idea of emergent learning as elaborated by adrienne maree brown in her book *Emergent Strategy*.

One of the major takeaways of this participatory process was the understanding that in order to achieve a structural change there was an urgent need in what Ms. Margaret Gordon called - "intersectional cooperation." Based on Kimberlé Crenshaw's definition of intersectionality, "all oppressions are interlinked and cannot be solved alone."[4] This was a great lesson to learn from a life-long fighter for environmental justice such as Ms. Margaret Gordon, who (in her own words) has seen it all "from the White House to the outhouse and everything in between". Today, similarly to many other veterans of the movement as well as its emergent leaders, Gordon's goal is centered on education. Our studio partners shared hope that a fundamental shift in the mainstream mindset is possible by educating a future generation of scholars and practitioners to be able to see beyond the boundaries of the current status quo and to be open to radically new, emergent possibilities.

Building the Plane as We Fly It

In order to build trust and nurture allyship with a community partner one needs to fully immerse themselves in relationship building, stepping outside the professionalist comfort zone and breaking the safe distance of non-commital detachment. This type of relationship has a closer resemblance to family ties and conversations with tribal elders, rather than client relationship management. Regular professional relationships are seen by community members as transactional, raising suspicions about the integrity of any long-term commitment or capacity to instill any real change.

It takes time to start understanding the nuances of reciprocal value exchange between us, as representatives of an academic institution, and our partners, who represent underserved communities. In our case, this learning involved lengthy in-depth conversations both before and during the studio, unpacking the meaning of each partner' roles, goals and accountability criteria. What helped us

[4] Crenshaw, Kimberle, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. (1989) Iss. 1, Article 8.

to build a rapport with our community partners was our genuine acknowledgement of their expertise in the subject matter, as well as our acceptance of critique and correction of our approach. In this process we developed a deep respect for our partners' proven legacy of activism and their heroic fight against structural injustice.

The first step in the process was compiling a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each community partner. This agreement included the scope of engagement from both sides as well as a description of a project that would be beneficial both for educational purposes and for community needs. Each community organization had a stack of projects they were working on and the main challenge was to define the concrete fragment that the students could respond to. As the semester rolled out, we conducted several rounds of engagement with our community partners, who offered their knowledge and interest with endless generosity. This included walking tours to their neighborhood, presentations of their work and conversations with students. What we offered in exchange was student projects that responded to this information and visualized speculative and imaginative scenarios of potential alternatives.

It is hard to measure to which extent this exchange was equitable and whether we succeeded in maintaining a non-extractive partnership. Unfortunately, academic institutions are still allocating very limited budgets to support community engaged projects and the tiny stipends that we offered seemed woefully inadequate to our collaborators. Instead, our partners assured us that the core value that they saw in this collaboration was piloting the new model for education, which saw community partners as institutional equals, mentoring a generation of professionals who could not imagine a design process that did not include direct engagement with people on the ground and did not prioritize community needs. They were happy to be co-conspirators in reimagining the power structure of the academy, setting a precedent for a new kind of learning.

Reflection and Cross-pollination

As our relationships evolved throughout the semester, the value of our collaboration started to emerge in unpredictable ways. It became apparent that the project outcomes and even the most exciting student ideas were less impactful than the process itself. In the course of the dialogues between the students and community members, there was a visual transformation that occurred in the way students assessed the situation and also in the way they understood themselves in relation to it. It was inspiring to observe the slow process of "identification," as defined by Richard Jenkins[5], among the students and also among their instructors, as we were recognizing our differences and biases, our positionality and intent. Moreover, as

[5] Jenkins, Richard, *Social Identification* 3rd Edition, (2008) Routledge: London and New York.

we were expressing ourselves and forming questions for our partners, who did not have professional architectural backgrounds, the more we were uncovering the shortcomings and built-in barriers of the language with which we attempted to communicate our thoughts and ideas.

This learning was eye-opening for everyone involved and was also reflected in the post-semester testimonies by the students. As we learned from the comments of our community partners, these realizations were mutually beneficial. Participants from the community have shared that their engagement with curious and compassionate young professionals was uplifting and empowering. By describing their needs and visions to the students, they were deepening their own understanding of the steps that need to be taken and the stakes behind them.

Our immersive learning into the intricacies of identity politics, power dynamics, and implicit biases was supported by two invited workshops led by design educators and rooted in social practice. Shalini Agrawal and Steve Jones, both professors at CCA teaching in Critical and Ethic Studies and Graphic Design programs respectively, have extensive community practice outside of school and have been promoting community partnerships in education for decades. Their workshops helped to set the tone for the students for how to show up in community and what to watch out for.

Most of the engagement with the community partners happened online, due to the high risk of COVID. We have conducted two participatory workshops that brought together our three community partners as well as professionals and officials from the industry and government. Despite their virtuality, these workshops generated exciting cross-pollination that sparked ideas from across the spectrum of city making and invigorated the discussion with fresh perspectives. Such concentrated engagement was productive on many fronts and is preserved as a record of knowledge useful for future research.

Emergence

Following adrienne maree brown's Emergent Strategy approach, we believe that change is constant and that this studio is part of a journey, in which evolving and continuous relationships inform the changing practice of architecture. There is still a long way to go in shifting the paradigm of professionalism, expertise and academic education. It takes courage and humility to abandon the citadel of capital "A" Architecture and to foreground the lived experience of human beings as an equal, if not primary, source of knowledge. We hope that the engagement and conversations that we covered in this book shed some light towards the possibility of this new direction.

Community Partners

Ms. Margaret Gordon
West Oakland Environmental
Indicators Project

Brian Beveridge
West Oakland Environmental
Indicators Project

Gina Bugiada
Equity Research Team

Lucia Castello
Equity Research Team

Jessica Jobe Sea
Equity Research Team

Maribel Ramirez
Excelsior Action Group

Mel Flores
Excelsior Action Group

George Turner
Phatt Chance

Rosa Martinez
Origen

Glynis Nakahara
Japantown Task Force

Jeremy Chan
Japantown Task Force

Karen Kai
Japantown Task Force

Rosalyn Tonai
National Japanese
American Historical Society

Professional Respondents

Gülgün Kayim
Creative City Making,
Minneapolis

Shira Shaham
East Bay Permanent Real
Estate Cooperative

Jamario Jackson
TransForm

Savlan Hauser
Jack London Square BID

John Bela
Gehl Architects

Chris Corgas
Office of Economic and
Workforce Development,
San Francisco

Jesse Shapins
SideWalk Labs

Carrie Denning Jackson
SideWalk Labs

Binta Ayofemi
Visual Artist

Carlos Medellin
CCA and RISD

Participatory Workshops

Guest Presentations

"The city is the stage for a war of narratives"

- Michel De Certeau[1]

The *Common Ground* studio arranged two participatory workshops to showcase and prototype alternative visions of a resilient and invested city that challenge market-driven urbanism and confront the historic disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation imposed on communities of color in the United States. Representatives of the partnering organizations, *Excelsior Action Group*, *Japantown Task Force*, and the *West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project*, met with invited professionals from across the country and across a variety of spatial disciplines to envision a city of the commons collaboratively, through the worldbuilding process facilitated and moderated by the studio members.

How can investment and development be channeled to restore public life and heal the social infrastructure of underserved communities, turning the mindset of scarcity into a vision of abundance?

[1] Michel De Certeau, from *The Practice of Everyday Live.* 1988.
Quote referenced by Gülgün Kayim.

CCM Engagement Principles

- Prioritize & build relationships
- Meet communities where they are
- Simple, playful, mobile & friendly
- The community is the expert

Creative CityMaking Minneapolis: Engagement Principles featuring the work of the activist artist Sam Ero Phillips / slide by Gülgün Kayim

Jack London Square BID: Panel Talks and Community Forums / slide by Savlan Hauser

Creative City Making, Minneapolis

Gülgün Kayim, Director of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy at the City of Minneapolis

The Creative City Making program in Minneapolis was established to tackle a representational gap which tailored a false impression of progressivity undermining the reality of deep racial disparities that ravaged the city. *"The city is the stage for the war of narratives,"* and the core goal of the CCM program is to forefront narratives that are typically not considered in planning processes. CCM facilitates an *intersection* between the government and the under-represented communities through artist-led community engagement. Thanks to interactive and relational practices of the artists rooted in the community, CCM has dramatically increased and diversified the reach of public participation, centering the voices of the most vulnerable, marginalized and previously excluded communities. With this approach, Creative City Making opens up a pathway for an inclusive and equitable governance.[2]

Business Improvement Districts, Oakland

Savlan Hauser, Executive Director at Jack London Improvement District

Oakland is finding new ways of doing business, and a new landscape for economic development. Jack London Square Business Improvement District (BID) was hit by the pandemic that restricted public gatherings, impacting the economic and cultural vitality of this downtown area. Despite this challenge, the local businesses and organizations found ways to adapt and even expand through the use of the public right-of-way, door-to-door reach with care packages, and far-reaching online events such as wine tastings and more. While traditionally BIDs are tasked with small-scale physical improvements, today they seek a wider imprint, getting involved in long-term real estate development and community advocacy, such as the Howard Terminal Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), youth programs, and homelessness mitigation initiatives. Although COVID had a detrimental effect for the local economies, it has also allowed them to see new possibilities for allyship and inclusion and to challenge previously unthinkable barriers.

SOLUTIONS MUST MEET THE MULTIFACETED NEEDS OF OUR RICHLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.

It's not just about: Housing &Commercial

It's about:
Job creation
Culture and the arts
Enterprise development
Community roots
Healthy families
Resilience planning
So much more!

Cooperative Economics: Solutions Must Meet the Multifaceted Needs of Our Richly Diverse Communities / slide by Shira Shaham, EB PREC

Hardware

Private Space
Shared private space
Common space
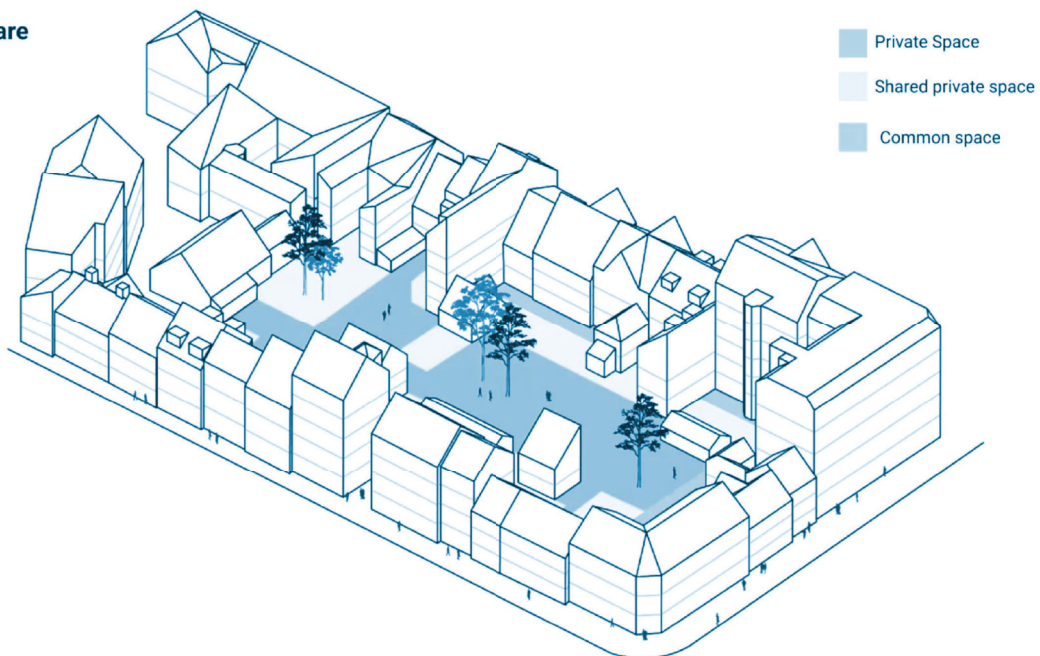
City of Copenhagen: cooperative ownership through the Green Courtyard Program / Slide by John Bela

East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative

Shira Shaham, New Projects Director

Property is more than the speculation of housing development. Through cooperative efforts, there is a growing movement towards a new form of ownership, restoring the community's access to equity and its control over land and its history. EB PREC is a multi-stakeholder cooperative that works to permanently remove land from the speculative real estate market and to put it under the democratic control of the community. As a cooperative, EB PREC is owned and run by its members, who share its profits and benefits. Its work fosters meaningful reconfiguration of assets, aimed to restore the richly diverse social infrastructure and to secure permanently affordable housing for underserved BIPOC and allied communities. Its restorative approach includes capacity building through education and technical support, cultural fortification through supportive housing and art space for local art collectives, and community ownership of neighborhood development stewarding the vision through participation. The recent acquisition and revitalization of Esther's Orbit room, an iconic historical Jazz club on 7th street, is an example of mobilizing the local community against cultural erasure and displacement and bringing the Black Renaissance into the future.

Copenhagen's Cooperative for Green Spaces

John Bela, Partner and Co-Director of Gehl Architects San Francisco

Cooperative housing in Copenhagen can serve as a tangible model for Bay Area's movement towards collective ownership. 20% of the housing stock in Copenhagen is social housing, owner-operated and run by self-governed organizations, who manage the property through tenant democracy. The Green Courtyard Program, adopted in the city during the 1960s, incentivized resident groups of individual urban blocks to come together and revitalize the interior courtyard of their block through landscaping and space activation. The combination of "hardware," that is the existing enclosure of the traditional perimeter blocks, with *"orgware,"* that is cooperative ownership and resident-led governance of the tenant groups and public space management by the gardening guilds, created a sense of protectiveness and collectivity, generating the *"software"* of unique mixed-use programming and intergenerational activities. This model embodies urban capabilities for inventive cooperative relationships, which can produce an alternative outcome to the generic commercial programming of the ground floor, and inspire the future development in the Bay Area.

CASE STUDIES

Dinkytown
Maria Antonieta Ramirez

Claiborne District
Maria Antonieta Ramirez & Valeriya Velyka

Detroit Cultivator
Geada Alagha & Lulu Wang

Restore Oakland
Jason Gonzalez & Savannah Lindsey

Goodlife! Makan
Yun-Yun (Nicole) Kuo & Sanyukta Bhagwat

Burning Man & PDR in West Oakland
Chak Ying Wong & Mengxian (Karen) He

Creative City Making- collaboration between local artists and Minneapolis city planners.

Dinkytown

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dinkytown is a district located in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood near the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. It is centered around the corner of 4th Street and 14th Ave. Adjacent to Urban Neighborhood, the University of Minnesota and parks, it consists of schools, libraries, inns, and about eight blocks of culture, retail, entertainment and restaurants - everything is considered to be within walking distance. It is next to the University of Minnesota, which has made this a vibrant college-town. Additionally, many early businesses catered to University-area needs such as lodging, restaurants, and school supplies (including printing and book-binding), in addition to typical daily needs seen in many commercial areas.

Commoning Diagram
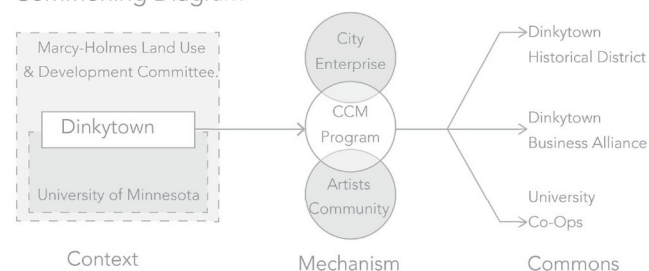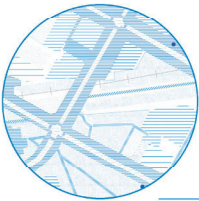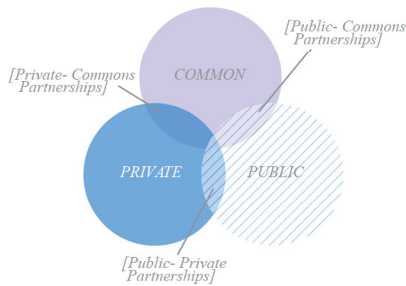
| Context | Mechanism | Commons |

- Marcy-Holmes Land Use & Development Committee
- Dinkytown
- University of Minnesota
- City Enterprise
- CCM Program
- Artists Community
- Dinkytown Historical District
- Dinkytown Business Alliance
- University Co-Ops

The Three Grounds
Maria Antonieta Ramirez

[Greater Dinkytown]

[Proposed District]

[Historic Dinkytown]

(A3)

(A2)

(A1)

[Transect]

[Peephole A]

The Three Grounds

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

Common

Hardware
The Dinkytown Business Alliance's mission is to strengthen the business climate of the Dinkytown commercial area. By becoming a member and participating, a business helps to strengthen their unified voice, and to build Dinkytown as a local and regional destination.

Software
The Dinkytown Business Alliance (DBA) includes entertainment, commercial, food and beverage, neighborhood serving commercial, cafes, library, government, arts and culture.

Orgware
DBA is located in the commercial parcels around the corner of 14th Avenue Southeast and 4th Street Southeast. The current use is mixed-use, residential and commercial.

Private

Hardware
Much of the housing and commercial spaces in this area cater to University of Minnesota students, faculty, staff and visitors needs.

Software
The area continued to grow with the boom in the University student body and the overall economy. The buildings from the later era are not included in the officially designated district, but are included in the case study.

Orgware
Dinkytown is has a lot of privately owned businesses.

Public

Hardware
The main public infrastructure is made by streets, roads, sidewalks and green spaces.

Software
There are more publicly-accessible spaces in the southeast near the Mississippi river.

Orgware
In the Southeast there is a green open space know as Riverfront.

34
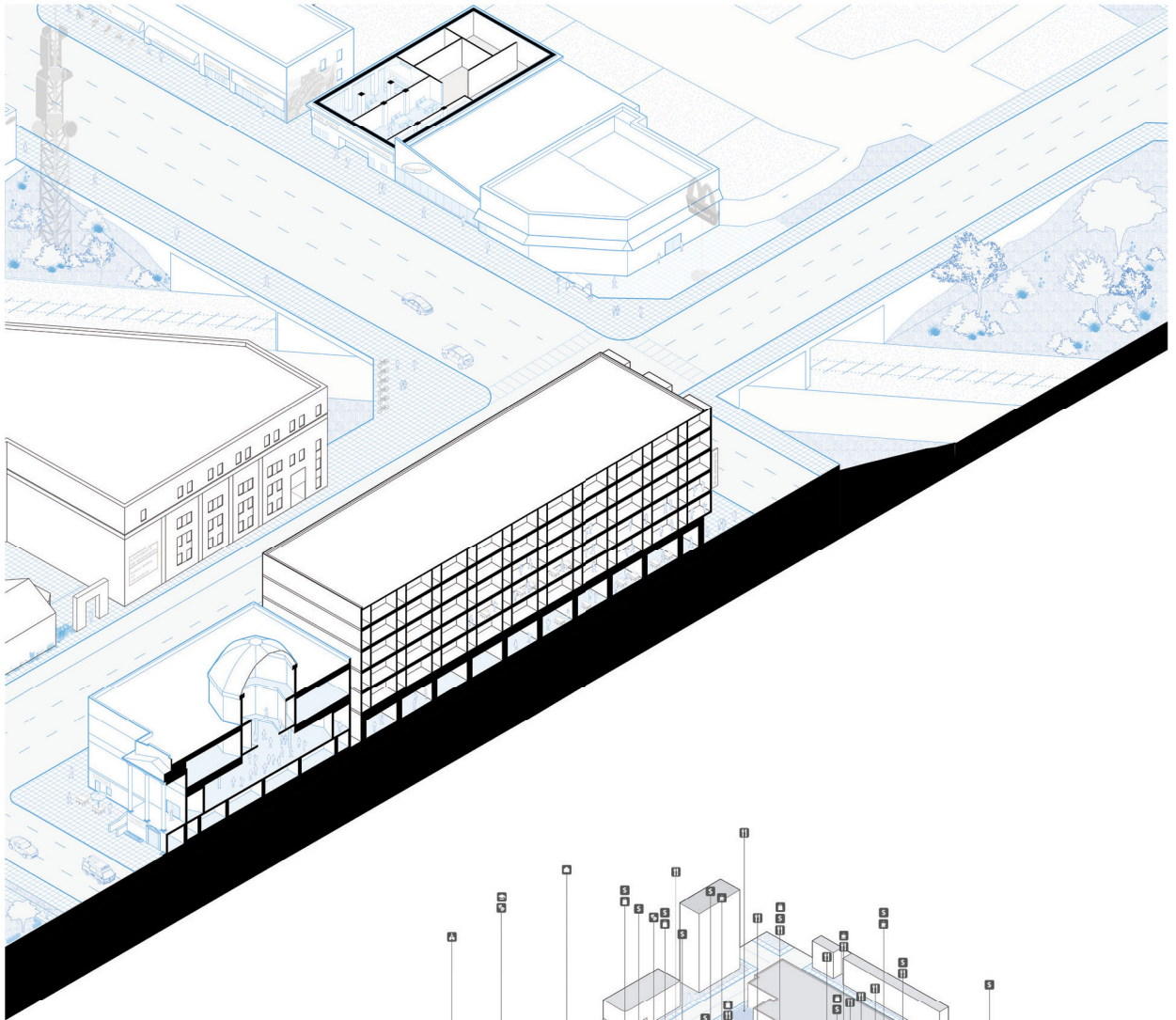
Dinkytown- Street Scale Axonometric
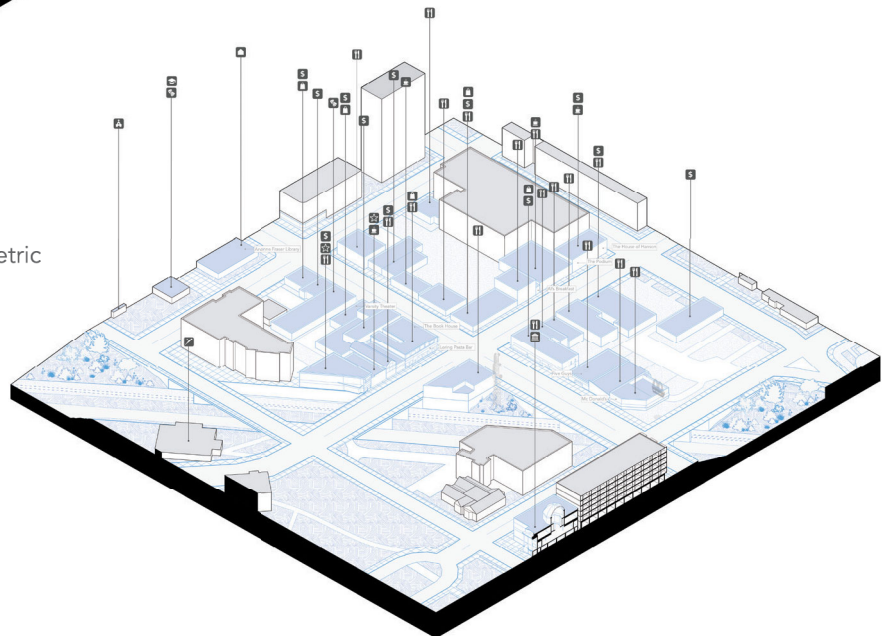
Dinkytown- Block Scale Axonometric

1 HIstoric Businesses

2 Transportation

3 Art

4 Secondhand Stores

5 Night Life

6 Student Life

Street Scale Axonometric

The intersection shown in this drawing is 4th St SE and 15th Ave SE. The section is cutting through Dinkytown Dome, a heritage building. This building contains offices in the upper floor and restaurants at the ground floor.

Block Scale Axonometric

Historic Dinkytown has been known to have a four block footprint but has expaned over this main blocks over the years. This study shows how the ground floor is a place of social and cultural life.

Dinkytown

The section illustrates the streets commercial and social environment; it demonstrates the location of the histroic train tracks and how it connects the University of Minnesota with Downtown Minneapolis.

Graphic Narrative
Maria Antonieta Ramirez

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

DINKYTOWN

CONTEXT	HISTORY	COMMONS	ENTERPRISE	COMMUNITY	BUSINESSES

DINKYTOWN: A LIVING HISTORY HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ITS ORIGINS.

IDENTITY OF DINKYTOWN: HOW THEY BUILD THEIR IDENTITY AND NAME.

THE HANGOUTS: LEGENDARY GATHERING PLACES. WHAT PLACES YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT.

Dinkytown: A Living History

'A crossroads, a meeting ground, a place of social and cultural ferment'

Beginning in the late 1950s, with great numbers of servicemen enrolling in the University thanks to the GI bill, and continuing through the '60s and '70s when the University's student population was one of the largest in the U.S., Dinkytown was a seminal place for a cultural flowering in literature, music, and dance, as well as a transformational social and political ethic.

The Mobile Artist. Creative City Making Artist, Sam Eno-Willips. Source: Creative CityMaking Dinkytown Documentary

A small, human-scale commercial district, where visionary ideas and dreams were ignited in conversations, meetings, and performances in the coffee houses, book and record shops, the studios, and the lunch counters of Dinkytown.

"Dinkytown: Four Blocks of History." A book by Bill Huntzicker
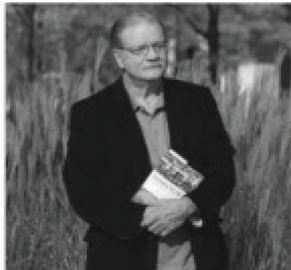
EASTON DAILY
Journalist and author Bill Huntzicker poses with his newly released book. Source: The Minneapolis Daily

Kristen Eide-Tollefson
The Book House

Kristen Eide-Tollefson, Co-founder and project coordinator of Preserve Historic Dinkytown. Source: Creative CityMaking Dinkytown Documentary TianInfoDaily

Origins of important cultural movements are located in specific places, such as buildings and rooms.

A stretch of sidewalk, an intersection, shop fronts, and particular buildings—even particular rooms in buildings that are still pointed out by passersby today.

Dinkytown is still intact, though it could be threatened by multi-story, large-scale development.

Minneyot Illustration by Andy Sturdevant

Dinkytown's iconic central intersection is located in 4th Street and 14th Avenue.

THE TEN O'CLOCK SCHOLAR
418 14TH AVE. S.E.

AL'S BREAKFAST
413 14TH AVE. S.E.

VESCIO'S
406 14TH AVE. S.E.

VALLI PIZZA
412 14TH AVE. S.E.

MAMA'S
CORNER OF 4TH ST. AND 13TH AVE. S.E.

GRAY'S DRUGSTORE
SW CORNER OF 4TH ST. AND 14TH AVE.

BRIDGEMAN'S
S.E. CORNER OF 4TH ST. AND 15TH AVE.

Dinkytown's identity is embedded in its people and buildings.

A man sits and waits at the Haircuts for Change chair. Photo by Pierre Ware. Project: Creative healing through haircuts funded by the Vitality Foundation to support 10 urgently needed artist-led creative healing. Source: Arts Midwest News.

Detronta "Tron" Kirksey
Miles Barber Shop

Mohammed Aliye (left) and Isaiah Goloda (right) style customers' hair at K Signature Miles Barber Shop on Lake Street in Minneapolis. Aliye moved to the U.S. from Nigeria to pursue his passion for cutting hair. Source: Creative CityMaking Dinkytown

EASTON GREEN, DAILY
The Loving Pasta Bar now stands in place of the former Gray's Drug Store. Gray's drug was once the terminal for the first Nova diner started in Minneapolis. Also Bob Dylan's had his apartment upstairs.

BY ELIANA SCHREIBER / The Minnesota Daily

A History of Writers, Musicians, and Intellectuals

At a coffee house called the Ten O'clock Scholar on 14th Street, a young Bob Dylan found his voice as a folksinger. The nationally renowned University Film Society got its start in Dinkytown, as did The Loft Literary Center, which began in a bookstore on 4th Street, and a pioneering modern dance school above a drycleaners also on 4th Street.

DINKYTOWN TOOLBOX   **CREATIVE CITY MAKING**

CONTENTS

Creative City Making
Minneapolis

Creative City Making brings artists and City of Minneapolis staff together to stimulate innovative thinking and form new practices to create a more responsive government.

Creative City Making

Creative City Making works to achieve the City's 'One Minneapolis' goal by *integrating creative processes into City practices and policies* in an innovative approach toward eliminating economic and racial disparities.

WHERE?

Getting Out of the Office and into the Community

I'M A CREATIVE CITYMAKER

The office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy partnered with Intermedia Arts, an arts organization with deep roots in the community.

HOW?

I'M A CREATIVE CITYMAKER

CREATIVE ECONOMY

CREATIVE ECONOMY

The program operates out of the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (ACCE) at the City of Minneapolis. ACCE works to build innovative intersections between the City and the community and to transform systems through policy and practices at the individual, department and City enterprise level.

PRACTICES TO MOBILIZE IMAGINATION

1 THE FOUR CITIES MODEL

To create a sustained vision for how we want the City of Minneapolis to serve the community, Creative CityMaking created the Four Cities Model. The Fourth City is our ideal, and the effort to reach it guides our work every day.

2 SIMPLE RULES

Creative CityMaking works to create systems change through collaboration.

☑ Artfully engage underrepresented communities
☑ Test big ideas
☑ Just add cost
☑ Leverage conflict as a resource
☑ Run with what works
☑ Generative value

3 ADAPTIVE ACTION

We approach our work through adaptive action, a process of repeatedly asking three basic questions.

4 SHARED VISION

Shared vision is crucial to successful collaboration. We start by developing a vision for our team partnerships and collaborative work. This vision guides our effort to accomplish together what we cannot accomplish independently.

Artwork: Jeremiah Bey

PLAYER ROLES

1 THE FIRST CITY PUTS ITS OWN INTERESTS FIRST

The city as a government institution committed primarily to its own growth and sustainability, the First City privileges its own self-interest as an enterprise. Interactions are transactional.

2 THE SECOND CITY PARTNERS FROM THE TOP DOWN

Organized around the city as a partner, the Second City recognizes it cannot grow without leveraging all of its diverse assets. The city promotes partnerships while maintaining top-down control. This pattern limits community influence and agency while allowing access to some city resources.

3 THE THIRD CITY RESPONDS TO COMMUNITY

A relational city that tries to partner more effectively, the city enterprise becomes an increasingly inclusive and permeable system. In the Third City, relationships matter as well as transactions. The city is more responsive to the authentic needs and well-being of communities. Reciprocity and mutual benefit start to emerge.

4 THE FOURTH CITY IS ONE WITH THE COMMUNITY

One whole organism that is open, ecological, inclusive and equitable, the Fourth City holds that everyone who lives and works within its boundaries is an equal and necessary part of the city's processes and future. Creative CityMaking has yet to see the Fourth City as a sustained condition, but we have seen it emerge in moments. The Fourth City is our ideal, where the city government and the people it serves are one.

Claiborne District
María Antonieta Ramirez & Valeriya Velyka

Claiborne Avenue- before and after the construction of the elevated I-10.

Claiborne District

New Orleans, Louisiana

The CLAIBORNE CULTURAL INNOVATION DISTRICT (CID) is a 19-Block transformation of space beneath the elevated I-10 expressway along Claiborne Avenue, from Canal Street to St. Bernard Avenue.

The African-American Tremé neighborhood in New Orleans changed when Claiborne's beautiful oak trees were replaced by large concrete columns. The I-10 Expressway was built in the 1960s over Claiborne Avenue, a boulevard with a central green space that served as the commercial heart of Tremé.

Community recommendations were implemented regarding the recapture and activation of the space beneath the elevated I-10 expressway. The revitalization project became a way to advance economic opportunity and cultural preservation for residents. A commercial corridor where business development and training are provided sets up the CID as a unique experience for New Orleans entrepreneurs and business owners.

The CID is now a resident-governed effort focused on providing direct pathways to business ownership, workforce development, and community capacity building. The cultural economy fulfills the needs of the neighborhood, by providing retail and enhanced services as a culture-based economic driver.

Commoning Diagram
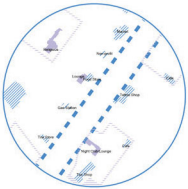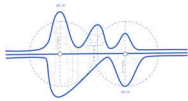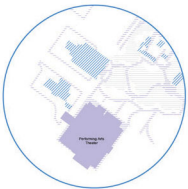
New Orleans Business Alliance

Claiborne

Ujamaa Economic Development Program

Cultural Bussinesses & Non-Profits

CID

Commercial & Community Assets

Treme Historical District

Claiborne Avenue Business Association

Preservation (Jazz Houses)

Context

Mechanism

Commons

The Three Grounds

Maria Antonieta Ramirez & Valeriya Velyka

(B3)

(A3)

(B2)

(A2)
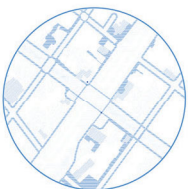
(B1)

(A1)

[Treme Neighborhood]
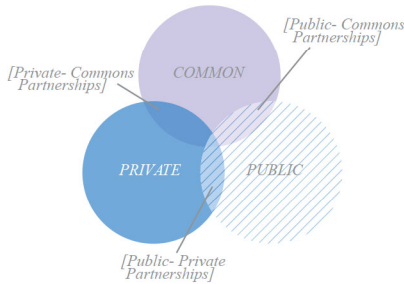
[Claiborne Corridor]

[Peephole B. Commercial]

[Peephole A. Art & Cultural]

[Transect]

The Three Grounds

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible
Ground Floor

Bus Stops

Common

Hardware
Cultrinal nodes such as jazz clubs, performing arts theaters and the highway activate the ground floor and serve as places for commoning.

Software
Annual events celebrate the love of music and dance within New Orleans.

Orgware
The city's practice of commoning attracts both residents and visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

Private

Hardware
Various types of housing and office space make up most of the private layer.

Software
The transition from residential to commercial use ranges in each block. A completely residential block will feel more private.

Orgware
Property and homeowners are the stakeholders in the private sector of New Orleans.

Public

Hardware
Properties such as non-profits, schools, and shops make up the majority of the public layer.

Software
Retail and government paid services are typically accessible by the general public.

Orgware
District taxes and organizations help support the local programs available in New Orleans.

Transect Axonometric at the Block and Street Scale
Maria Antonieta Ramirez & Valeriya Velyka
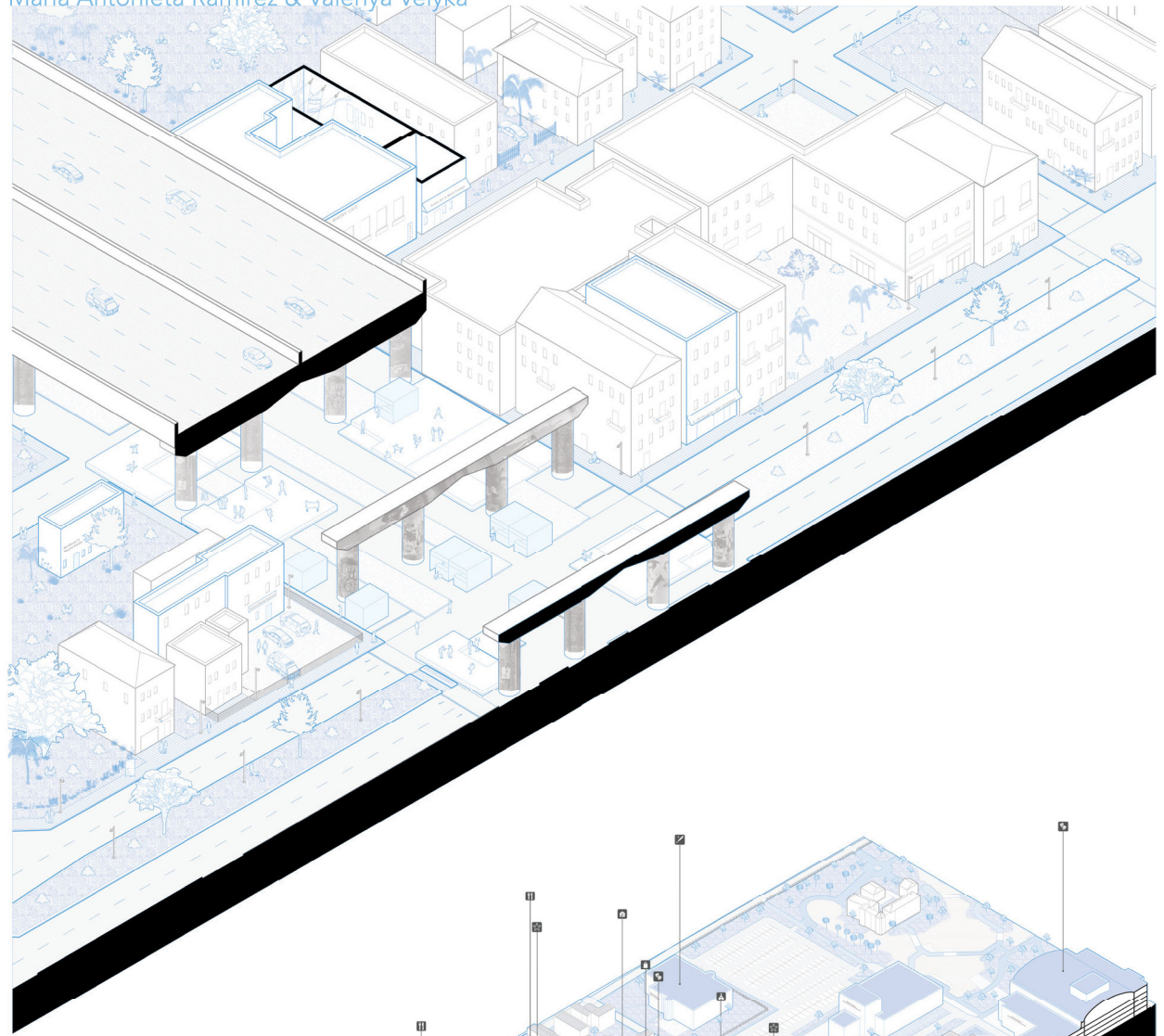
Claiborne - Street Scale Axonometric
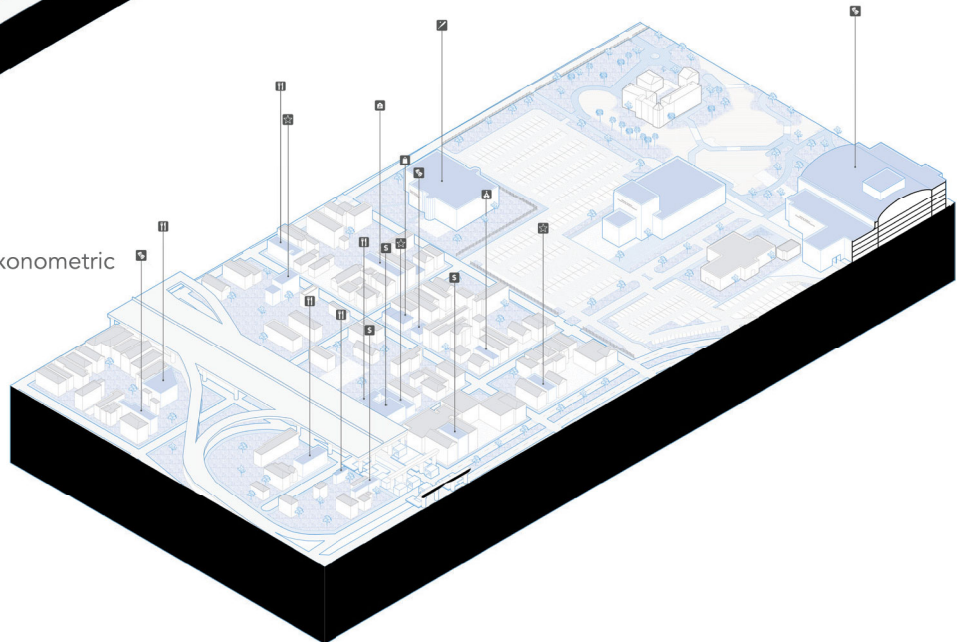
Claiborne - Block Scale Axonometric
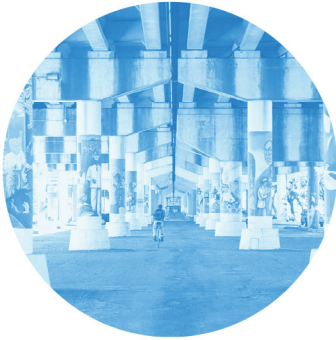
1 Under the Bridge

2 Active Underpass

3 Exterior Form

4 Cultural Economy

5 Business Support

6 Network and Training

Street Scale Axonometric

The highway serves as a cultural attractor, by activating the space underneath for annual events and festivals. The flexible space contains modular units to accommodate the scale of the event and density.

Block Scale Axonometric

The larger scale shows the gradient of public to private buildings in relation to the highway. There's also a branching hierarchy between smaller residential streets and more common oriented main streets, like the one extending to the theater.

Claiborne Innovation District

In addition to being a cultural connector of art, music, and food, the CID aspires to encourage the youth and provide valuable education platforms. The CID program is a software driven approach focused on the neighborhood's programmatic needs.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
CLAIBORNE DISTRICT

| CONTEXT | HISTORY | COMMONS | ENTERPRISE | COMMUNITY | BUSINESSES |

CLAIBORNE: HUB OF ART, CULTURE AND COMMERCE HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

CLAIBORNE: WHAT DRIVES THE LOCAL ECOMONY.

HOW THE COMMUNITY HACKED INFRASTRUCTURE. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

Claiborne: Hub of Art, Culture and Commerce

History of the Bridge

The I-10 Expressway was built in the 1960s over Claiborne Avenue, a boulevard with a central green space that served as the commercial heart of Tremé. Claiborne Avenue was never the same. The African-American Tremé neighborhood in New Orleans Claiborne's beautiful oak trees were replaced by large conrete columns.

In addition to destroying several blac owned businesses, the division created by the highway would contribute to increased crime rates and the distinction between the more desirable neighborhoods. As a result, the infrastructure of the I-10 directly fed into the objectives of systemic racism.
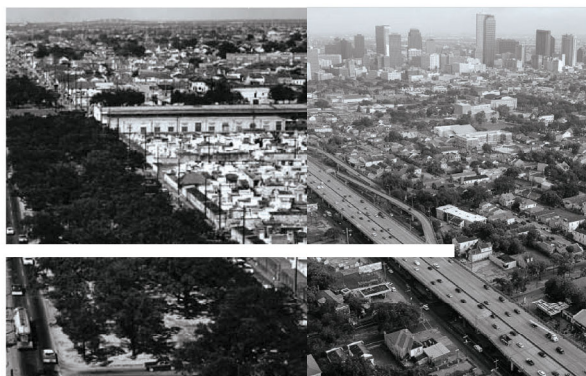
Credit/ Congress of the New Urbanism. Freeways without Futures 2019. & Claiborne Expressway (Intersect 10). Built from 1966-1968

Activating the Bridge
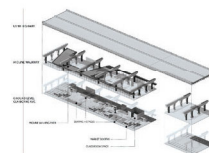
Built with green infrastructure, in addition to being a world-class market with arts, crafts, produce and seafood vendors, the CID includes classrooms and exhibit spaces, interactive technology and education demonstrations, and will be a site for youth programming, health, environmental, and social services, community projects, workshops, and special events for the residents of the Claiborne Corridor.

Treme 7th Ward Arts and Culture Festival by Rebecca Todd.

A typical walk through New Orleans' historic Claiborne District contains vibrant music, crowded food markets and smells that range from sweet to savory.

Treme 7th Ward Arts and Culture Festival by Rebecca Todd.

Preserving the history, culture, and soul of Black New Orleans.

Treme is America's oldest African-American neighborhood— known for African American history, Authentic Creole food, Second line parades and jazz funerals, and the Backstreet Cultural Museum.

The Tremé/7th Ward neighborhoods host an annual, free spring festival (usually every Memorial Day Weekend) that features neighborhood tours, bar crawls, a Gospel breakfast, and a Congo Square second line!

Community Workshop with Colloqate.

The groundsetting phase of the Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District project spanned five months and multiple workshops. The focus of the workshops was to provide several entry points for community members to actively participate in the development of ideas and experiences for what is to become the CID.

The Antigravity Magazine Claiborne Corridor by James Cullen

What once was a symbol of division, the I-10 underpass transforms to host arts and cultural events year round.

Claiborne: Support and Funding.

Quentin Messer, President & CEO, New Orleans Business Alliance speaks during the group's annual meeting. *Biz New Orleans*

Under the Bridge, Arts and Culture Festival
Murals done by local artists

The CID's 19-block transformation from Canal St. to St Bernard Ave.

Organizations Involved:

NEW ORLEANS BUSSINESS ALLIANCE

UJAMAA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CLAIBORNE AVENUE MERCHANT ASSOCIATION

NEW ORLEANS CLAIBORNE CORRIDOR BUSSINESS

CID NOLA

Adjacencies of the Commons

Local entertainment is easily accesible off the I-10 highway. The Treme Art and Music Lounge is a popular attection to both locals and tourists, as well as other live music venues like Candlelight Lounge which provides an intimate setting and Louisiana's famous Creole cuisine. Join in on the celebration of local history and culture by a visit to the Jazz Museum.

CLAIBORNE TOOLBOX **CREATIVE CITY MAKING**

WHO?

2

Cultural Economy
New Orleans

The mission of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy is to create opportunities and systems that enable true economic activity and growth for cultural economy stakeholders and the public.

WHERE?

STRATEGY

1

Cultural Economy
New Orleans

Cultural Economy is defined as the people, enterprises, and communities that transform cultural skills, knowledge and ideas into economically productive goods, services and places.

4

Film, Artist, And Creative Resources
Creative Capital

Creative Capital has compiled a list of links for relief funds, grants and other funding sources for various types of creatives. The Office of Cultural Economy offers a modest funding program to individuals and organizations that are engaging in activities that promote the cultural economy through educating our youth, training cultural producers, providing networking opportunities, creating cultural events and much more.

WHAT?

3

Enriching
Four main Sectors

1 Film Industry

2 Cultural Bearers Engagement

3 Special Events

4 Leveraging Opportunities for New Orleans Artists

HOW?

6

Evaluation
Aplication

☑ **Community Impact:** Creates a deep and lasting affect on the community and the means to maintain that impact.

☐ **Economic Impact:** Significantly impacts the economy through training, networking, and creating lasting contributions to individuals and businesses' development in their field.

☐ **Cultural Contribution:** Deeply aligns with the culture of the community, enhances it and recognizes its diversity, and works with those qualities to contribute to the culture.

☐ **Alignment with the missions** of the Cultural Economy and Economic Development Offices.

Growth in Consumer Spending in New Orleans, 2015-2018

Spending in the Claiborne Corridor CID outpaced Greater New Orleans by 12 times

2015   2016   2017   2018

5

Cultural Economy Funding Program
What we fund

Workshops, training, and conferences that build cultural economy capacity in cultural non-profits, neighborhood organizations, and cultural businesses.

Capacity Building includes networking, teaching skills such as fundraising/grant writing, working with partners to improve programming, leveraging, education about sustainability, learning of new concepts such as place-based planning, etc.

Events with art and cultural components. Funds can be used for paying musicians or other performers, attracting tourists, or other activities that will directly impact either cultural workers or attract sales for art and cultural vendors.

Detroit Cultivator (Oakland Ave. Urban Farm)
Geada Alagha & Lulu Wang

Images of Detroit Cultivator, Detroit Metro Times.

Detroit Cultivator

Detroit, Michigan

DETROIT CULTIVATOR (Oakland Avenue Urban Farm) is a community-led urban farm, hosting cultural and educational programs for the local North End community. The project is a non-profit, community-based organization aimed to circulate healthy food around the neighborhood, boost the local economy, provide jobs, and activate the arts and cultural scene in the North End neighborhood.

North End has had a long history of redlining and displacement. In fact, North End was part of a bigger neighborhood named Paradise Valley, which was demolished after WWII as the government attempted a "slum clearance" and urban renewal. The act resulted in the demolition of two Black neighborhoods, Paradise Valley and Black Bottoms, while providing little to no accomodations for the displaced residents and businesses. North End received its name for its location as the north end of the former Paradise Valley. One of the byproducts of redlining resulted in food deserts and lack of accessibility to healthy, nutritious food for the local residents.

Detroit Cultivator reclaims back the land and provides back to the community.

Commoning Diagram

North End Christian Community Developement Corporation

Detroit Cultivator

Studio Akoaki

Local Artists

Northend Community

Local Businesses

Detroit Cultivator Farms

Detroit Cultivator Performance

Detroit Cultivator Artist Exhibitions

The Three Grounds
Geada Alagha & Lulu Wang

HEADQUARTERS

AGRICULTURE

COMMUNITY SERVING PROGRAMS

LYNN ST

OAKLAND AVE

ARDEN PARK BLVD

INTERSTATE 75

(A3)

[Detroit Cultivator]

[Transect]

WESTMINSTER ST

(A3)

WOODWARD AVE

HOLBROOK ST

LYNN ST

OAKLAND AVE

ARDEN PARK BLVD

INTERSTATE 75

WESTMINSTER ST

(A2)

WOODWARD AVE

HOLBROOK ST

LYNN ST

OAKLAND AVE

ARDEN PARK BLVD

[Transect]

WESTMINSTER ST

(A1)

(A1)

WOODWARD AVE

HOLBROOK ST

INTERSTATE 75

The Three Grounds

Social Infrastructure

Speculated Lots (6)

Productive Lots (5)

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

Common

Hardware
The Oakland Avenue Urban Farm, a program of North End Christian Community Development Corporation, is a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to cultivating healthy foods, sustainable economies, and active cultural environments.

Software
Profitable Corporations, Nonprofit Organizations, Education Programs/Institutions, Arts & Culture, Religious Institutions, Green Spaces, Food & Beverages/Grocceries.

Private

Hardware
Housing is a temporary accommodation that caters to people who collaborate and partners from outside the community.
The project brought 5,000 visitors every year, enhancing tourism.
The boundaries of farm and gardens are not specified on the map.

Software
Buildings, Land, Boundaries, Footprints.

Orgware
Ownership Legend.

Public

Hardware
Streets, Roads, Sidewalks, Public Infrastructure, Public Transportation.

Software
Government owned & Regulated entities.

Orgware
Ownership & Access Legend.
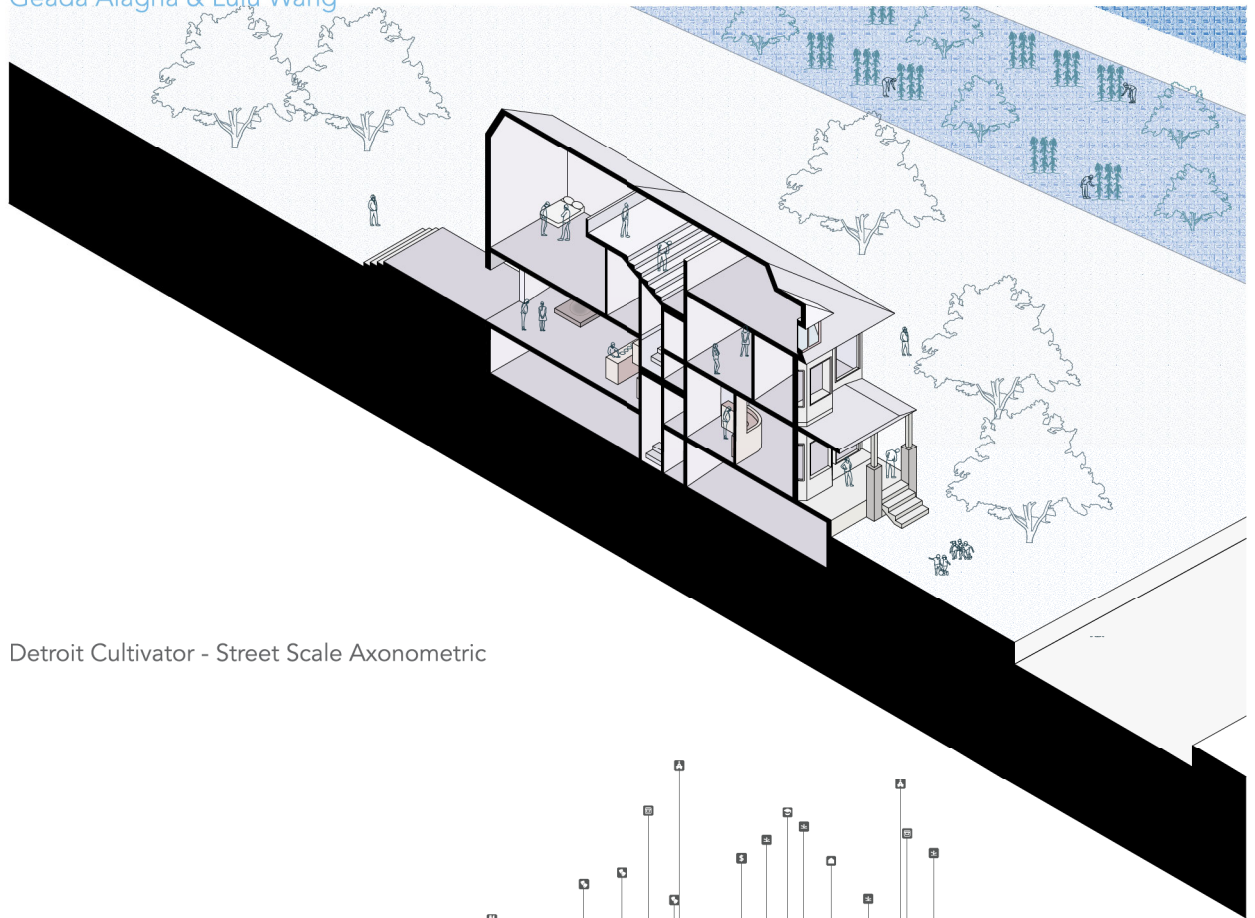
Detroit Cultivator - Street Scale Axonometric
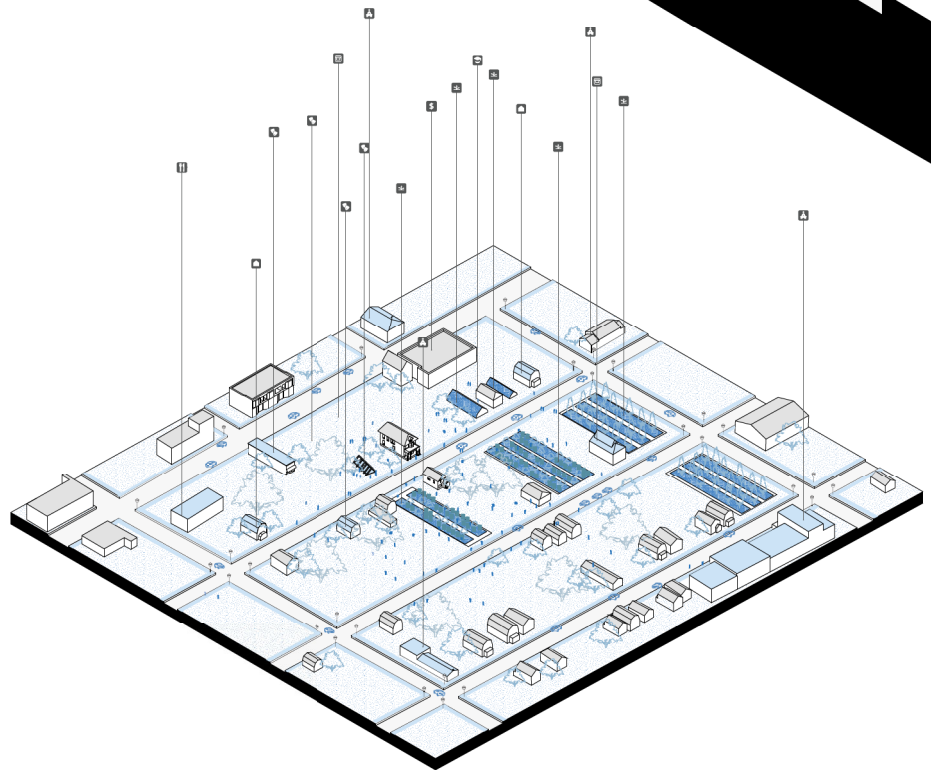
Detroit Cultivator - Block Scale Axonometric
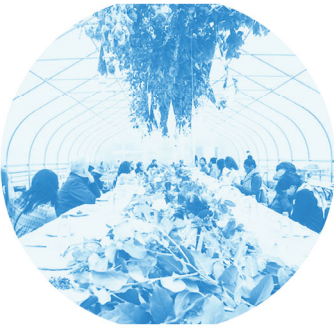
1 Hoop Garden Harvest Lunch

2 Hoop Garden

3 Urban Farm

4 Temporary Farmer's Market

5 Community Ownership

6 Education and Mentorship

Street Scale Axonometric

The project utilizes existing structures by renovating them to host community programs and events. The street scale axonometric shows a harmonous relationship between local residents and urban farms/cultural programs.

Block Scale Axonometric

The Block scale axonometric shows the flexibility of urban farm locations, utilizing vacant lots and residential front/back yards. The urban farm claims squatters' rights and plays an important role in reclaiming land through community efforts and giving back to the community.

Detroit Cultivator

The section shows the potential usibility of the renovated space for community and visitors' practice, demonstrating the coexistance of communal living, education and farming, which have successfully attracted a lot of tourists to the area and enhanced the local economy.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

DETROIT CULTIVATOR

DETROIT CULTIVATOR: A LIVING HISTORY
HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ITS
ORIGINS.

IDENTITY OF DETROIT CULTIVATOR:
HOW THEY BUILD THEIR IDENTITY AND NAME.

**THE HANGOUTS: LEGENDARY
GATHERING PLACES.** WHAT
PLACES YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT.

Detroit Cultivator: The Northend Community Stablizer

'A farm, a meeting ground, a place of social and cultural ferment'

The Detroit Cultivator is a 6 acre urban farm that holds local food production, cultural activity, business incubation, and ecological stewardship for the community of North End in Detroit. Through this farm community members have access to more nutritious foods and education/mentorship programs for children and young adults. The farm is designed by Studio Akoaki and ran by the Northend Christian Community Developement Corporation.

Image credit: Detroit Cultivator, Detroit Metro Times.

Northend's identity is embeded in it's people and history

A photo of farmers in Detroit, courtesy of Keep Growing Detroit's GoFundMe page for the Detroit Black Farmer Land Fund. (Keep Growing Detroit)

Image credit: Detroit Cultivator, Detroit Metro Times.

A small scaled urban farm not only offering the Northend community nutritious and fresh produce, but also creating spaces to support local artists and designing educational programs to uplift the younger generation.

MichPost illustration by Studio Akoaki.

On its Path to Sustainability

The farm rejuvinates vacant buildings for educational, arts and performance programs, to delinitate North End's history and to respect its surrounding neighbors.
With a storm water collector, the farm is able to water its farms sustainably.

Volunteers enjoying food harvested from the urban farm.
Image credit: Keep Growing Detroit

Farm Team Member Lloyd Gill, Dewan McCain, Executive Director Jerry Hebron and Farm Team Leader Donald Williams of the Oakland Avenue Urban Farm at the farm that includes a block of land in Detroit on July 9, 2020. Oakland Avenue Urban Farm, which was founded in 2009, is one of three organizations that have raised more than $50,000 in funds for Black farmers to own more land in Detroit.
KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL, DETROIT FREE PRESS

Detroit's Agrihood

STUDIO AKOAKI

Anya Sirota, an associate professor of architecture at the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, has been working more than four years to help make the Oakland Avenue Urban Farm self-sufficient and sustainable. To buy the six acres the farm operates on, she studied speculators in Detroit and then spent two years gathering the property for the farm's land trust with help from investors and grants. Source: Michigan Photography

GEADA ALAGHA // LULU WANG

Image credit: Oakland Avenue Urban Farm
Jerry Hebron of Oakland Avenue Urban Farm and Erin Bevel of Detroit Black Community Food Security Network pose together at the urban farm in Detroit on June 25th, 2020. ABOVE: Oakland Avenue Urban Farm manager Carlos Leonard wraps up a day of work in the garden.

Detroit Cultivator's

OAKLAND AVE'S FARMERS MARKET
PERFORMANCE STAGE
APPLE ORCHIRD
LIBRARY
THE LANDING
AGRICULTURE GARDENS
BISSAP GARDEN
COMMUNITY HOUSE & FARM STORE

A History of Artists and Musicians

North End experienced a cultural and economic boom in the 1920s-30s, when many Motown musicians came from and performed in North End's historic Red's Jazz Shoe Shine Parlor.

URBAN FARM TOOLBOX

SUPPORTIVE SUSTAINABLE SPACE MAKING

WHO?

"SSS" MAKING

SSS Making aims to achieve the total inclusivity and well being of the community. Fighting off speculators and fast food chains, explorations of the neighborhoods. Once and for all rebuilding the community for the community.

CONTENTS

SUPPORTIVE SUSTAINABLE SPACE MAKER Michigan

Bringing educators, artists and community of Northend together to form new models to rejuvinate neighborhoods instead of gentrifying.

COMMUNITY
ARTISTS   EDUCATORS

WHERE?

Getting your hands dirty

A team of community members, educators, designers and artists working in the field together to rebuild culture.

I'M A SUPPORTIVE SUSTAINABLE SPACE MAKER

Community orginizations, local artists and members of the community partnered with Studio Akoaki to rejuvinate and redevelop the community.

HOW?

I'M A SUPPORTIVE SUSTAINABLE SPACE MA...

LEARN TO LISTEN 4
ADAPTIVE ACTION 3

4 SIMPLE RULES

1 THE SSS MODEL
2 SIMPLE RULES

COMMUNITY WELL BEING

Community as stakeholders
Programs are designed to create job opportunities and support locals. Bringing community members together to revitalize the neighborhoods. Studying speculator models to reclaim land, identity and culture.

PRACTICES TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

1 THE 3S MODEL

Explore ways to reactivate existing architectures with inno-vative locally rooted programming.
Take the site off-grid by creating artful and functional infra-structures.
Foster worker-owned businesses as economic drivers.
Integrate the arts into the fabric of community life.

2 SIMPLE RULES

Collaborating with the community to support the community.

- Encourage community engagement
- Support and uplift local artists, local start up and business owners
- Positive representation of responsibility and respectfulness

3 ADAPTIVE ACTION

We approach out work through a process of repeatedly asking three basic questions:

1. What does the community want/need?
2. What can we do to help the community?
3. What can we do help more communities?

4 LEARN TO LISTEN

Learning to listen to community members and understanding what they need is key to collaboration and rejecting the complicity of gentrification.

PLAYER ROLES

1 SPECULATORS
PUTS OWN INTERESTS FIRST

Completely ignores the needs of community, buys out land to sit on until value grows, then sell for a higher price.

ORGANIZATION

2 FAST FOOD CHAINS
TARGET POC NEIGHBORHOODS

By being a cheap, fast food option, capitalizing on low-income neighborhoods who's residents have little to no access to nutritious fresh foods.

ORGANIZATION

3 THE MORAL DESIGNER
RESPONDS TO COMMUNITY

Design according to community's needs and not to gentrify.

COMMUNITY   ORGANIZATION

4 NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
ONE WITH THE COMMUNITY

Organized and lead by members of the community, who understands the community's needs and not to profit off of neighborhood lands.

COMMUNITY   ORGANIZATION

Restore Oakland
Jason Gonzalez & Savannah Lindsey

Fruitvale development - before and after.

Restore Oakland

Fruitvale, Oakland

Fruitvale is a neighborhood with a rich cultural history with walkable and lively environment along International Blvd. The Fruitvale Village project by The Unity Council seeks to harness these zones and increase social cohesion and social capital through the creation and strengthening of walkable neighborhoods. By placing Restore Oakland in the midst of this network that is already in place, Restorative Justice City has the capacity to be grown steadily and with stability, as the organizations and social service community groups housed within Restore have the chance to incubate.

Restore Oakland is a collaboration between Ella Baker Center and Restaurants Opportunities Center United (ROC). These two organizations aim to increase upward mobility to Black and Brown folks as well as fighting to end mass incarceration through training and job opportunities in food and food service industries, specifically higher paid positions such as management and fine dining.

Commoning Diagram
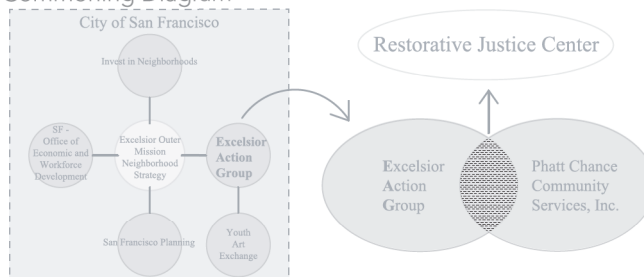
The Three Grounds
Jason Gonzalez & Savannah Lindsey
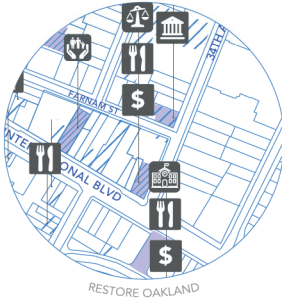
RESTORE OAKLAND
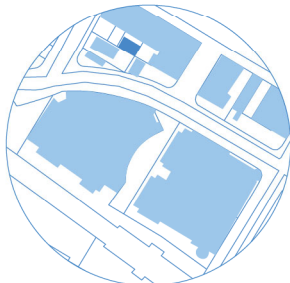
FRUITVALE VILLAGE

FRUITVALE BART STATION
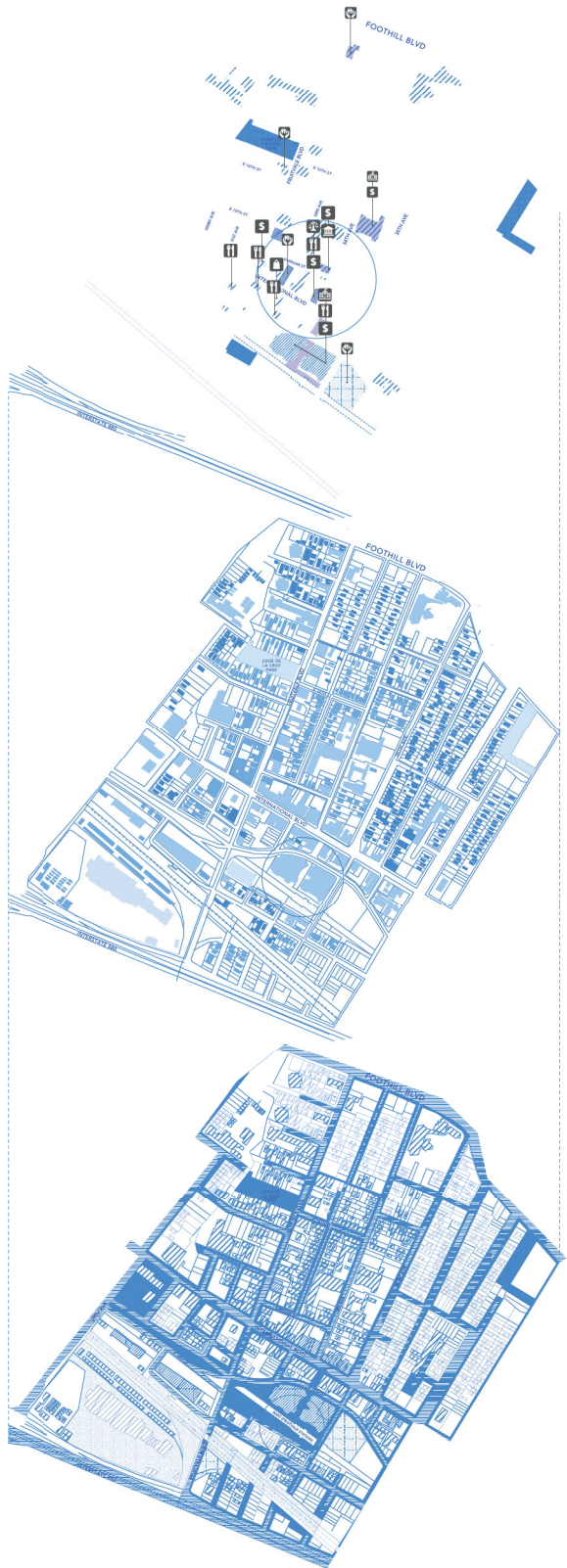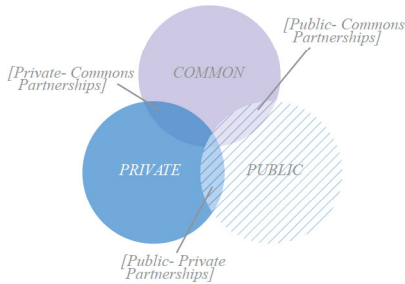
FOOTHILL BLVD

The Three Grounds

Common

Hardware
Sidewalks, Fruitvale BART, Fruitvale Village, Colors Restaurant; Parks within Fruitvale neighborhood.

Software
Project WHAT!, Housing Committee/Tenants' Rights Clinic; Pop-Up Village.

Orgware
Restorative Justice City; The Unity Council; La Cocina.

Private

Hardware
Restore Oakland; Fruitvale Village Offices; Cristo Rey De La Salle East Bay High School.

Software
Offices within mixed-use Fruitvale Village; Colors Hospitality Opportunities for Workers Training (CHOW) Institute; La Cocina Incubator Program.

Orgware
Restorative Justice City; The Unity Council; Community Works West; Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth.

Public

Hardware
Fruitvale Village, Retail shops within Village; Bart Station; Bart Parking Lot.

Software
La Clínica de La Raza; "Summit Learning" Platform; RJOY Outreach Programs.

Orgware
Restorative Justice City; The Unity Council; ROC United; Causa Justa/Just Cause, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

[Public- Commons Partnerships]

[Private- Commons Partnerships]

COMMON

PRIVATE

PUBLIC

[Public- Private Partnerships]

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

Transect Axonometric at the Block and Street Scale
Jason Gonzalez & Savannah Lindsey
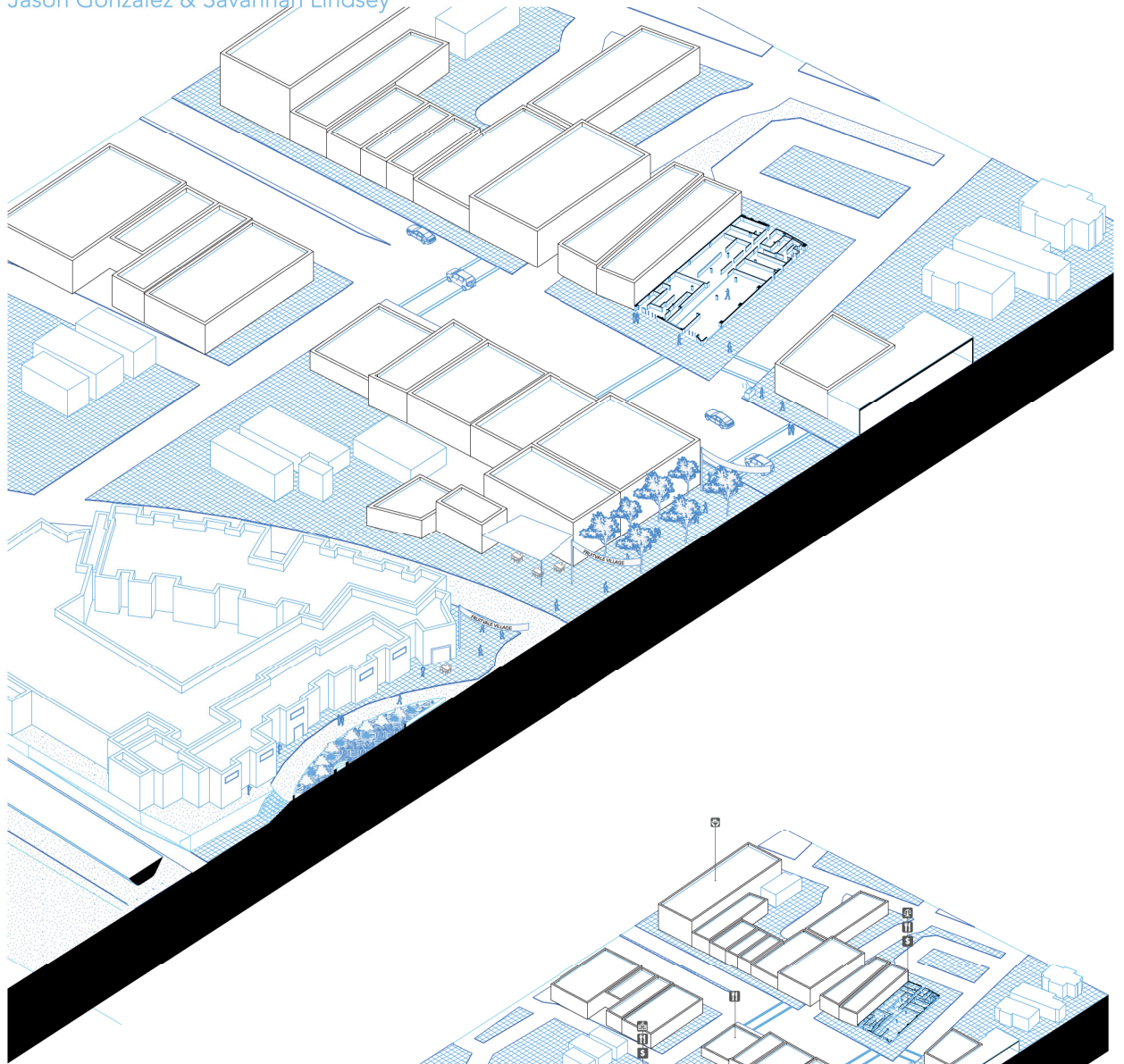
Fruitvale - Street Scale Axonometric
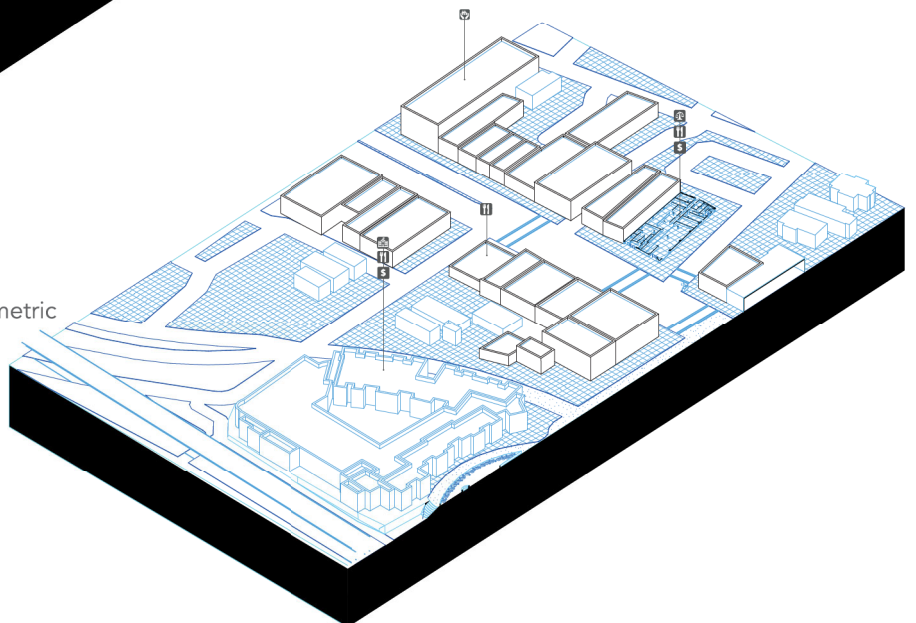
Fruitvale - Block Scale Axonometric
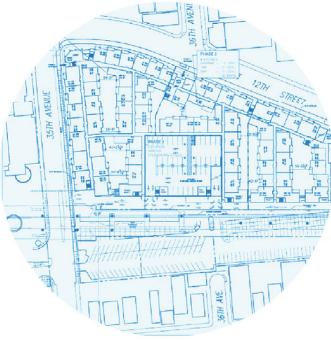
1 Urban Planning

2 Fruitvale Bart

3 Restore Oakland

4 Cultural and Historical Significance

5 Fruitvale Village

6 Local Community Leader

Street Scale Axonometric

We can see at the street level, the neighboring BART Station has a direct path towards International Blvd and Restore, therefore increasing accessibility and success of Commoning Orgware such as COLORS Restaurant run by ROC United. This is enabled by the already established Fruitvale Village, which was developed by The Unity Council.

Block Scale Axonometric

At the Block Scale of Restore and the Fruitvale Village, we can see how proximity and connection through public thoroughfares increase the "placemaking/placekeeping" of social justice and public serving organizations. Restorative Justice City was able to implement Restore Oakland into a neighborhood that has already established a commons area to increase social cohesion and public accessibility.

Fruitvale

Fruitvale is a neighborhood with a rich cultural history with a walkable and lively environment.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

FRUITVALE

Fruitvale: A Living History

'A crossroads, a meeting ground, a place of social and cultural ferment'

The name Fruitvale comes from the area's history as home to vast acres of fruit orchards. During the 1960s and 1970s this neighborhood experienced an increase in population, in particular with Latino residents, and became a center for the Chicano Movement that was taking part throughout the Southwest.

The iconic Fruitvale Village sign stands tall. *Photography: Savannah Lindsey.*

The Fruitvale Village is a national model for livable communities created by The Unity Council in the early 2000s. Located in the heart of the vibrant Fruitvale neighborhood, Fruitvale Village is a mixed-use development that includes prime retail spaces, offices, and apartments.
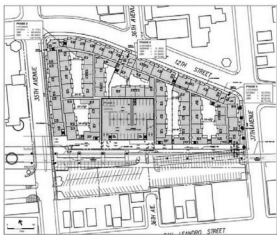
Fruitvale Transit Village Phase II. *Source: HKIT Architects*

Restore Oakland: A Restorative Justice Initiative

RESTORE OAKLAND // PROGRAM MANAGER
Tash Nguyen was born and raised in the Bay Area as a daughter of Vietnamese refugees and brings their lived experience to their advocacy work as a young person funneled through the school to prison pipeline.

RESTORE OAKLAND // DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Ashley Claw is a proud citizen of the Diné (Navajo) Nation and was raised in Phoenix, Arizona surrounded by her loving, resilient family and beautiful culture.

Origins of important cultural movements are located in specific places, such as buildings and rooms.

A stretch of sidewalk, an intersection, shop fronts, and particular buildings—even particular rooms in buildings that are still pointed out by passersby today.

Fruitvale is still intact, though it could be threatened by multi-story, large-scale development.

Fruitvale's iconic central intersection is located in 34th Avenue and International Boulevard.

THE FRUITVALE VILLAGE
3340 E 12TH ST.

CRISTO REY DE LA SALLE EAST BAY
HIGH SCHOOL
1530 34TH AVE.

CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA
3400 E 12TH ST.

LA TORTA LOCA
3419 INTERNATIONAL BLVD.

LA CLINICA DEL LA RAZA, INC.
1450 FRUITVALE AVE.

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY:
CESAR E. CHAVEZ BRANCH
3301 E 12TH ST.

Fruitvale's identity is embedded in it's people and buildings.

A woman and man sit together during a conference lunch. *Source: The Unity Council website.*

Deanna Van Buren delivers a 2017 TED Talk: "What a world without prisons could look like. *Source: Virginia Magazine. Janine Latus, Larger than Architecture*

RESTORE OAKLAND, FRUITVALE
Located in East Oakland, Restore is the first center for restorative justice and restorative economics in the country. Restaurant Opportunities Centers United will have their first Oakland restaurant on the ground floor, where they will train individuals to get front-of-house jobs and incubate businesses from low-income communities of color.
Source: Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

A History of Displacement and Justice Fighters

During the 1950's and 1960's era of "urban renewal," (the construction of BART and the Nimitz Freeway), countless African-Americans and Latinx were displaced out of West Oakland and into East Oakland, with Fruitvale being one of the neighborhoods where they were relocated. The migration into Fruitvale made the neighborhood turn into a community hub, not just for recently migrated Latinx, but Chicanos as well. During the civil rights movement, Chicanos who resided in Fruitvale joined forces to fight for civil rights, social justice and against police brutality.

RESTORE OAKLAND | **CREATIVE CITY MAKING**

CONTENTS

RETHINK OUR CURRENT PUNISHMENT MODELS

In response to the current state of mass incarceration and its disproportionate effect on communities of color, a workshop conducted between DJ+DS and Oakland city leaders envisioned a new model of Restorative Justice for the City of Oakland.

WHO?

TEAM-UP WITH EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Located across International Blvd from RESTORE Oakland, the Fruitvale Village has existed as "an international model for livable communities" since the early 2000s. The Fruitvale Village also houses social and community services as well as retail and food; the mixed-use space harbors a semi-enclosed courtyard which facilitates gathering.

https://unitycouncil.org/property/fruitvale-village/

WHERE?

LOCATE TRANSIT HUBS

RESTORE Oakland is located next to Fruitvale Bart, multiple AC Transit Lines, major roadways for car and bike access, in addition to being centered in a highly walkable area. This allows the services housed within RESTORE to have access to the largest number of people possible.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE NODES
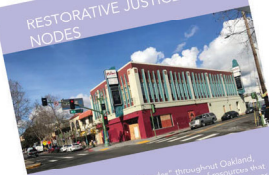
Using strategically placed "nodes" throughout Oakland, Restorative Justice City creates a corridor of resources that help to transform the landscape from crime and mass incarceration to a cycle of rehabilitation through community service.

COLORS

Creating a sense of identity through the use of specific and carefully curated colors, creating opportunity and celebrating foodcraft and service through COLORS

HOW?

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is essential for the formation of strong community bonds. It creates a sense of identity for local communities, instilling value in the neighborhoods they call home.

Goodlife! Makan Community Kitchen

Yun-Yun (Nicole) Kuo and Sanyukta Bhagwat

Top: Goodlife! Makan Community Kitchen
Bottom: Void Decks in Singapore

Goodlife! Makan

Marine Parade, Singapore

Goodlife! Makan is a community kitchen located at the void deck of the HDB block, which is a public housing building that is common in Singapore. It is a social initiative created by Montfort Care to support stay-alone seniors by providing opportunities to socialize and gather through food. With the shared experience of cooking and dining, it not only creates bonds between senior residents, but helps them rediscover their potential through developing roles and responsibilities from the process of food preparation and consumption.

Respecting the spatial quality of a void deck, the design emphasizes its porous setting to create an open and fenceless compound, to reduce social stigma and address the psyche of the stay-alone seniors. The experimental design shifts away from conventional gated or glazed-up elderly activity centre models to create an inviting communal space, seamlessly integrated with surrounding streets and walkways.

Goodlife! Makan is located in the Marine Parade Heartland. 'Heartland' refers to the areas in suburban Singapore with concentrated subsidized public housing. They are very much self-contained residential areas with markets, shopping malls, a cinema complex, restaurants and cafes, and schools. Some of these heartlands have transformed into regional business centres. All the major housing estates in Singapore are served by the subway, making the commute extremely easy and accessible.

Commoning Diagram

National Council Of Social Service

Goodlife!

MontfortCare

Caritas Singapore

Community Resource, Engagement & Support Team (CREST)

Casework & Counselling Services

Care Closer to Home (CACHE)

Befriending

Support Networks

Health care

Community Kitchen

Context   Mechanism   Commons
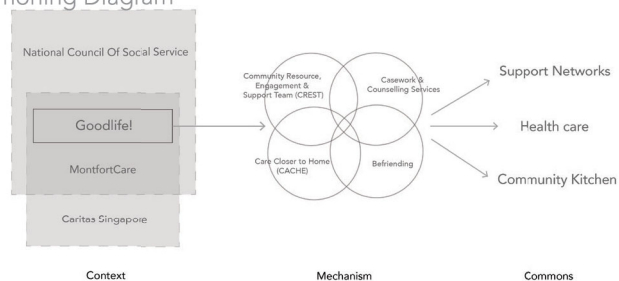
The Three Grounds

Yun-Yun (Nicole) Kuo and Sanyukta Bhagwat
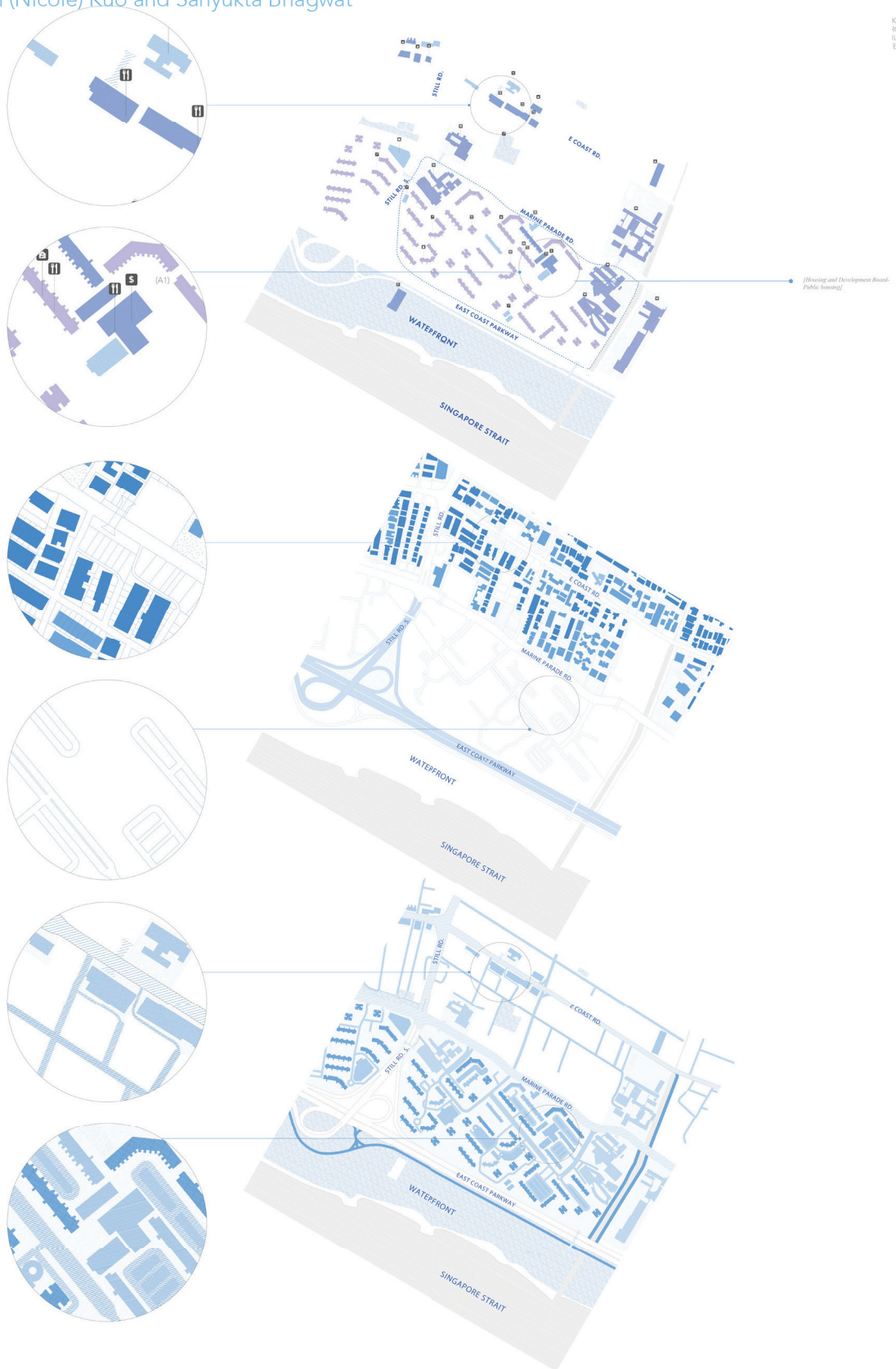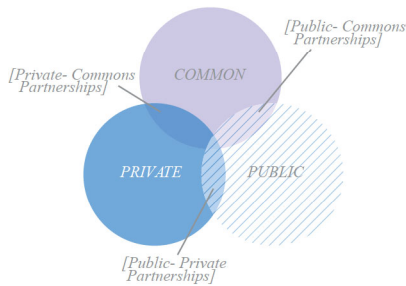
STILL RD.

E COAST RD.

STILL RD. S.

MARINE PARADE RD.

EAST COAST PARKWAY

WATERFRONT

SINGAPORE STRAIT

(A1)

[Housing and Development Board-Public housing]

STILL RD.

E COAST RD.

STILL RD. S

MARINE PARADE RD.

EAST COAST PARKWAY

WATERFRONT

SINGAPORE STRAIT

STILL RD.

E COAST RD.

STILL RD. S.

MARINE PARADE RD.

EAST COAST PARKWAY

WATERFRONT

SINGAPORE STRAIT

The Three Grounds

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

Common

The colourful 160 sq.m facility is a 60-person centre established by Montfort Care at the void deck at Marine Parade, with a communal kitchen at its nucleus. The place aims for re-connecting stay-alone elderly to a wider community to deepy facilitate multi-generational exchanges. Consideration was taken in the design and planning to meet the basic emotional, psychological, and social needs of the elderly community in Singapore.

Hardware

Void Decks, Roads, Streets, HDB housing blocks

Software

Community Kitchen, Libraries, Hawker Centre, Daycare Center

Orgware

Montfort Care

Private

Much of the housing and commercial in this area is catered to the working class citizens.

Hardware

Building Footprints, Transit, Boundaries

Software

Weddings, Funerals, Libraries

Orgware

Government facilities

Public

Hardware

Void Decks, Streets, Roads, Sidewalks, Benches, Public Infrastructure

Software

Parks, Public Living room

Orgware

Government facilities
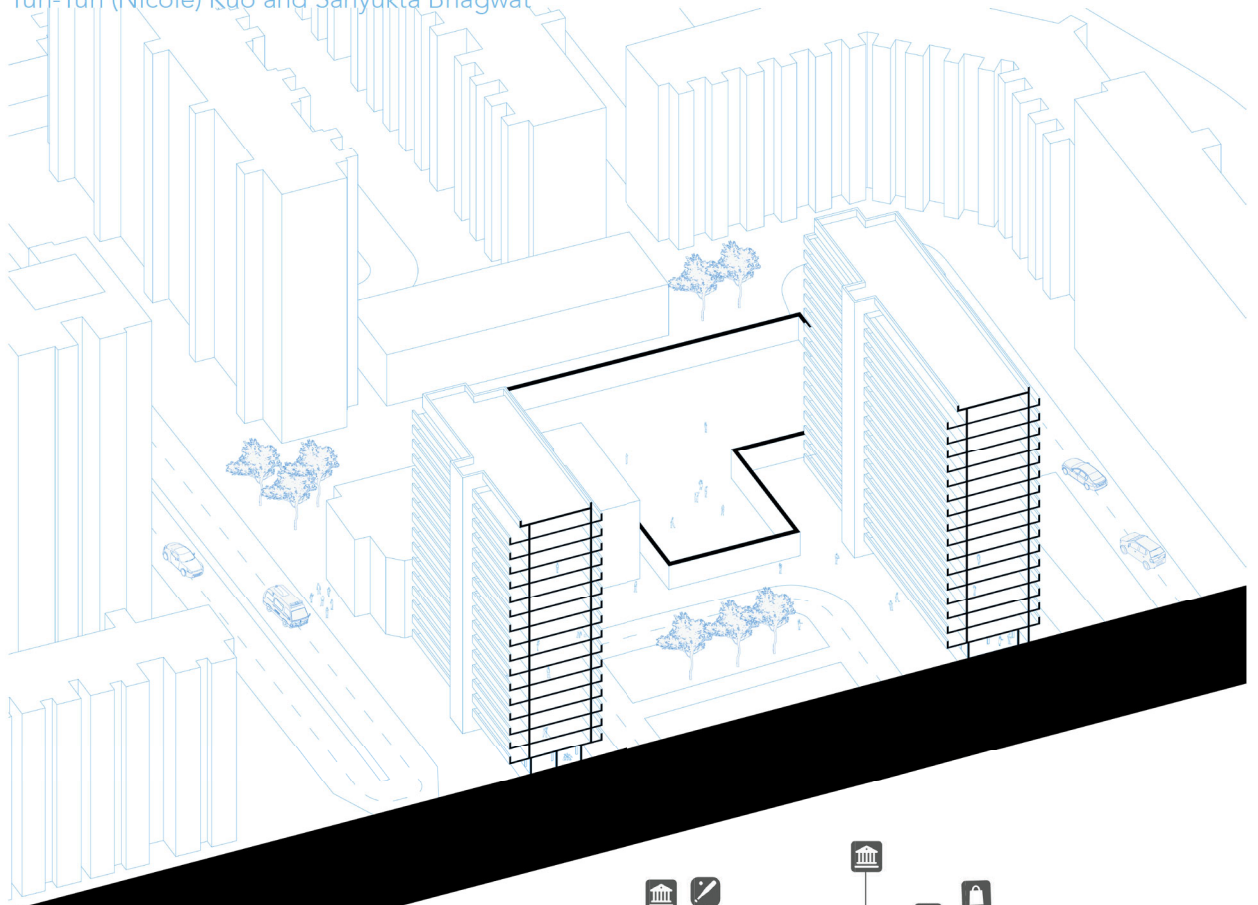
Goodlife! Makan - Street Scale Axonometric
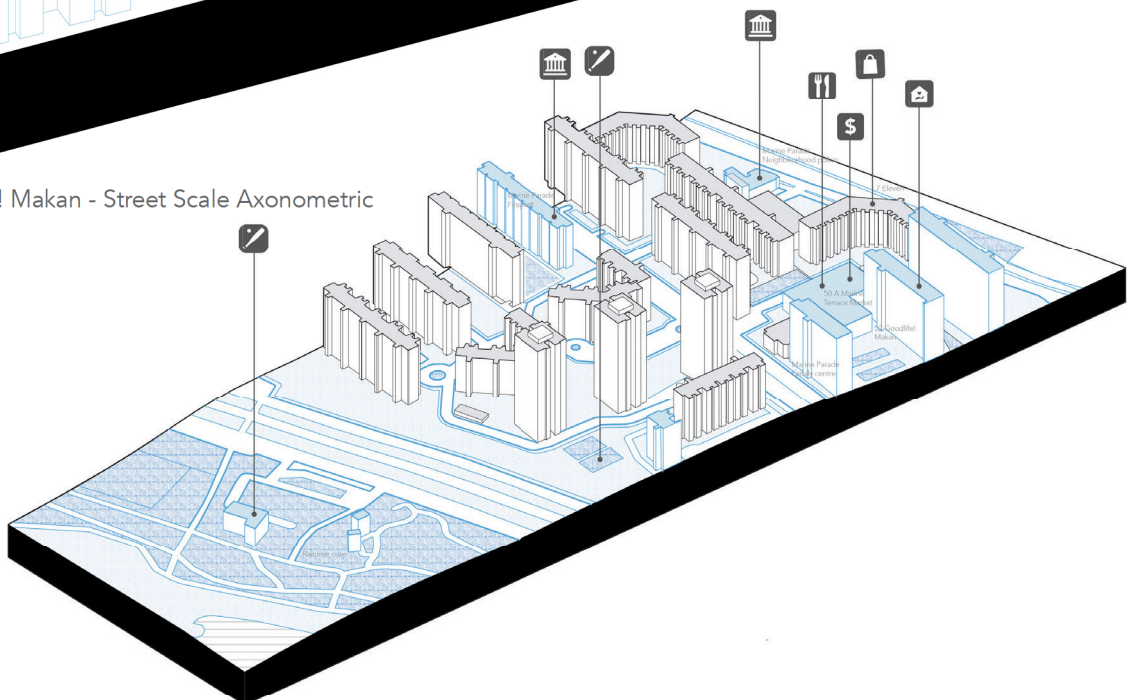
Marine Parade Heartland - Block Scale Axonometric

1 Public Living Room

2 Commercial Shops

3 Children's Playground

4 Senior Citizens' Corners

5 Hawker Centre

6 Community Kitchen

Street Scale Axonometric

Void Decks create a porous and inclusive ground floor environment for the Public Housing Community in the Marine Parade Heartland.

Block Scale Axonometric

The drawing illustrates the self-sufficient nature of a Housing & Development Board block. It contains main public services such as police stations, post offices, hawker centre, and daycare centers. Everything is within walking distance or only a few public transit rides away.

Marine Parade Heartland

The section illustrates the Housing & Development Board blocks neighborhood environment; it demonstrates the importance of void decks in the public housing community in Singapore. Void decks are programmed in various services. They tie together the bond between the local residents in the neighborhood and build a strong sense of community.

SINGAPORE

MARINE PARADE HEARTLAND

MARINE PARADE HEARTLAND:
A LIVING HISTORY
HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT ITS ORIGINS.

IDENTITY OF HEARTLAND:
HOW THEY BUILD THEIR
IDENTITY AND NAME.

THE HANGOUTS: LEGENDARY
GATHERING PLACES. WHAT
PLACES YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT.

Heartland: A Living History

Transition from Practicality to Improving Living Quality

During the 1960s, many of the HDB blocks built were filled with either homes or shops because the Housing and Development Board's (HDB) main priority was to provide adequate public housing for the local population.

In the 1970s, HDB began to construct its public housing on "pillars" to free up ground level spaces. The term "void decks" came into usage in the local newspapers around 1970. According to a report in The Straits Times, the oldest void deck in Singapore was built in 1963 at Block 26 in Jalan Klinik.

Void Decks can be commonly seen in Heartlands, which refers to a suburban residential area that are dominantly public housing.
Source: Youtube

In the 1980s, the Residents' Committees decided to construct purpose-built clubs to meet the needs of the elderly residents by renovating and partitioning the void decks of HDB estates, which typically are equipped with games, televisions, and music rooms.

A Senior Citizens' Corner set up by residents at the void deck of Block 440, Ang Mo Kio (2012).
Courtesy of National Heritage Board

'The Void Deck Ensures That Everyone Gets To Know Each Other, And Each Other's Cultures.'

More than 80% of Singapore's population lives in public housing, in buildings designed to government specifications. And Singapore's government ensures that every apartment building mirrors the country's ethnic mix, with Chinese, Malays, and Indians living as neighbors in proportion to their share of the population - 77%, 14%, and 8% respectively.

Void Decks Are Where Memories Are Made

A group of retirees who gather daily for chit-chats at the void deck of Blk 32, Marine Crescent (2012).
Courtesy of Belinda Tan

Malay weddings and Chinese funerals are commonly held at void decks of HDB estates. It's a popular choice of venue because of the space and cost considerations. Void Decks are spacious enought to accomodate large number of guests.

Residents' Committees (RCs) were introduced in 1978 to promote neighbourliness, racial harmony and community cohesiveness in the HDB heartlands. Each committee operates out of a centre which will be used to conduct meetings and/or to organise activities for residents.

Revitalizing the Void Decks?

Over time, the use of void decks has evolved. They are considered relatively a traditional social place, as they are most commonly seen in older buildings, from the 1960s-1980s, and some of these are being replaced with newer buildings without void decks.

Where New And Old Co-exist, Where Cultures Collide

TOA PAYOH
Say hello to the OG 'hood. It's the first town built by the HDB in the 1960s and has since become a blueprint for other heartland areas. Source: thehoneycombers.com
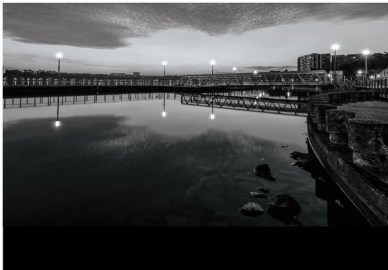
BEDOK
Founded in the 1850s, the area was made up of Kampong Bedok Laut and Kampong Bedok Darat. In the 20th century, it was a lively centre for the Malay community and a go-to hangout spot for British military veterans who were stationed in Singapore before independence.

NICOLE KUO // SANYUKTA BHAGWAT

THE KITCHENLESS CITY TOOLBOX

WHO?

Goodlife! Makan Making
Singapore

Goodlife! Makan, as a new initiative hopes to create a space for seniors to create bonds and rediscover their potential and interests. Montfort with a network of programs and a team of social service professionals strives to provide physical and mental health through health outreach and education.

CONTENTS

The 'Kitchenless City'
Singapore

The kitchenless city focuses on a historic housing typic housing blocks with collective kitchens. Modern times researcher Anna Puigjaner models the concept as a prototype for collectiveness and social cohesion in different cultures. The concept explores further the transition of a private space into a more diverse and semi public nature.

A "Sharing Model"

WHERE?

'Cooking' food and 'Catering' lives

GoodLife! Makan: a community kitchen at the void deck of a HDB block, with food as the social glue. This 60-person centre with a communal kitchen serves as a space for a program and caseworkers and counsellors to provide physical and mental health through health outreach and education. Cooking and eating is at the heart of social experience at the centre.

HOW?

Goodlife! Makan is our home!

1 — Community Resource, Engagement and Support Team (CREST)

2 — Casework and Counselling Service

3 — Care Closer to Home (CACHE)

4 — Befriending

Montfort Care with a network of programs and a team of social service professionals strive to provide physical and mental health through health outreach and education.

WE ARE A... SOCIAL ACTIVATOR

CEO of Montfort Care, Mr Samuel Ng said,

"At GoodLife! Makan, seniors share more than just the food on the plate.

He added,

"We want to change perception of stay alone seniors as objects of charity to seeing them as active and capable individuals; to move from end of life to a new lease of life"

COLLECTIVITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

1 THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The architectural design reinterprets social settings providing as an alternative model that is more inclusive and cost effective to create open neighborhoods

2 THE INTERIORS

Inspired by local spices, bright red is used to mark the kitchen and food preparation space. Spice jars are used for interior decor, taking into consideration Singapore's rich food heritage

3 THE ELEMENTS

Full height seamless glass doors offer a sense of transparency and natural light to flood within the interiors.
Flexibility of multiple concurrent activities has been achieved by strategically positioned mobile partitions

4 IN A NUTSHELL

The design capitalized on its porous void deck setting to create a colorful, open and fenceless compound, to reduce social stigma and shift away from conventional gated or glazed-up elderly activity centre models.

VIBRANT... INCLUSIVE... TRANSPARENT....

The spatial design concept is to meet the basic emotional, psychological and social needs of the elderly community in Singapore. The communal kitchen is kept open ended, so that the interactions are organic; where activity areas are clearly demarcated with vibrant colour scheme and explained with universal signages or pictograms.

2

Burning Man & PDR in West Oakland
Chak Ying Wong & Mengxian He
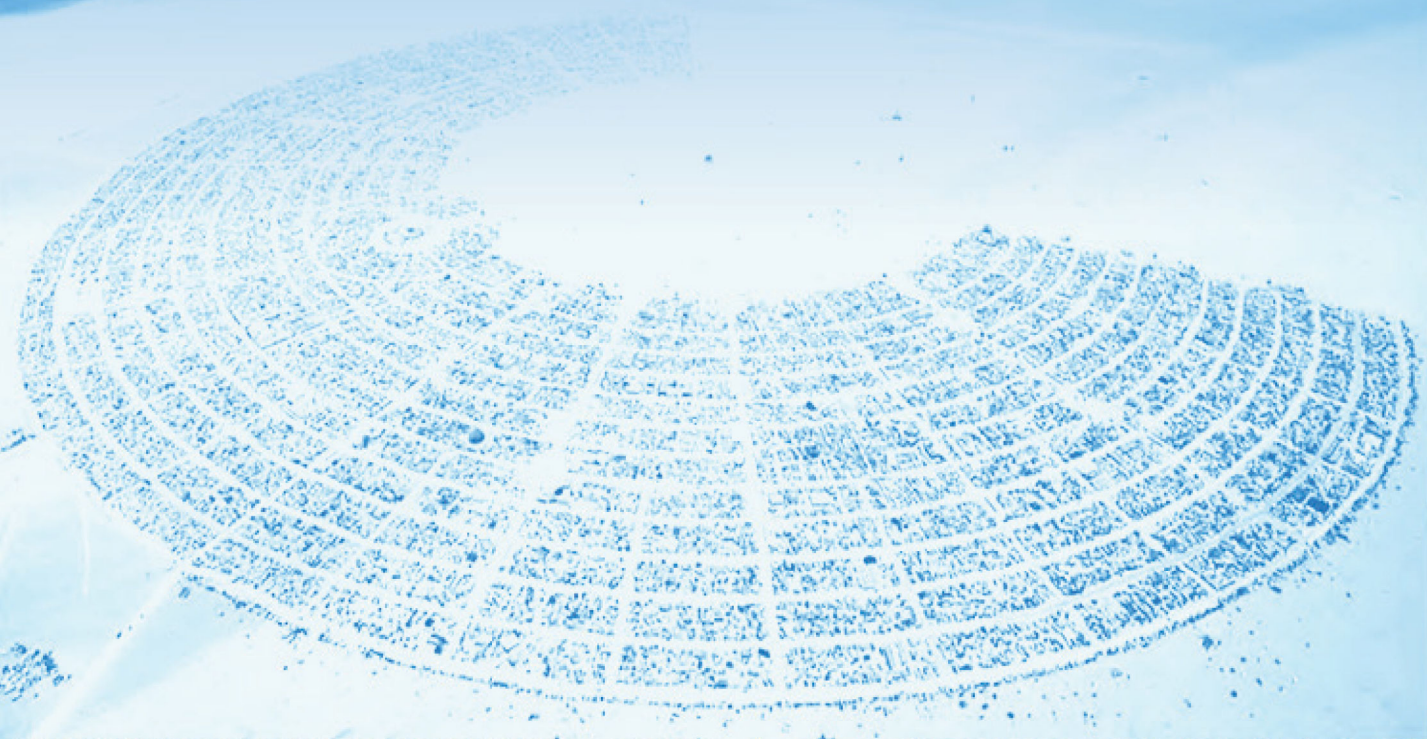
Map of Black Rock City in 1997 and West Oakland in late 50's.

Burning Man & PDR in West Oakland

Black Rock City, Nevada & West Oakland

Burning Man is not a festival, it is a community, a temporary city. It has been located in Black Rock City since 1997. The city's area is about 5.7 square miles, the circle of streets is about 1.8 miles in diameter, the Man is about a half mile from Center Camp. The city has a airport, post office, DMV, a temple, an official radio station (in addition to others), a recycling center, city information and greeting stations, a café, and a newspaper.

Burning Man started as an anti-government, anti-capitalist community, a Temporary Autonomous Zone, a "festal uprising of rebels who temporarily liberate an area from state control and market logic"(Kozinets). People who go to Burning Man are no mere "attendees" but rather active participants in every sense of the word: they create the city, the interaction, the art, the performance and ultimately the experience.

In the 50's and the 60's, when an industrial boom filled the shipyard with good jobs, many black people came from the south and settled in West Oakland. People called it the second Gold Rush. Since then, the neighborhood has undergone seismic changes. Once a hub for movements like the Black Panther Party and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the low rent and proximity to San Francisco has more recently attracted a young creative class.

Commoning Diagram
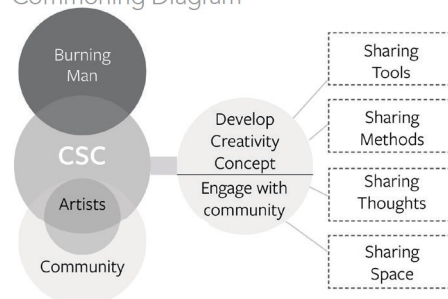
The Three Grounds
Chak Ying Wong & Mengxian He
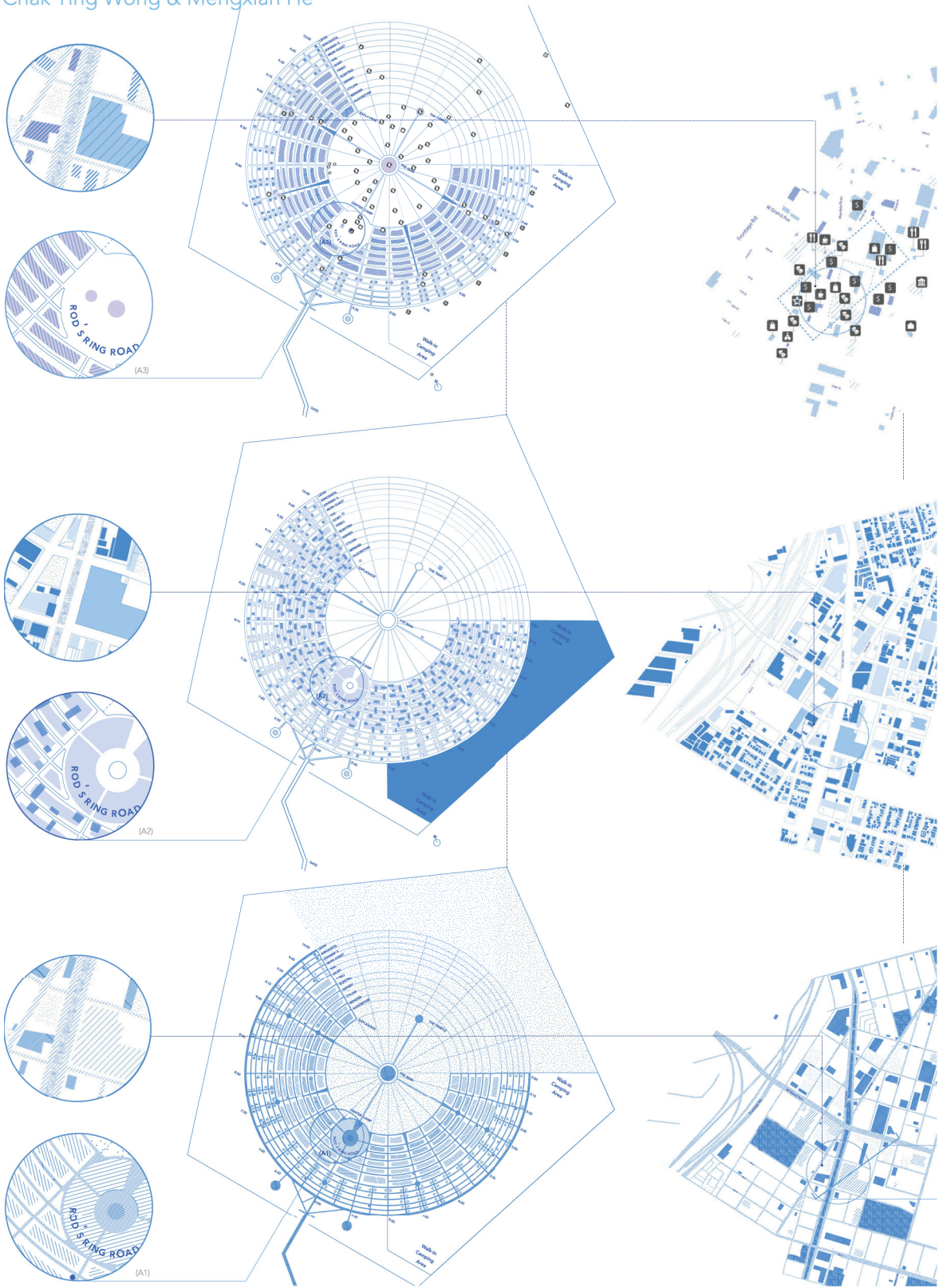
The Three Grounds
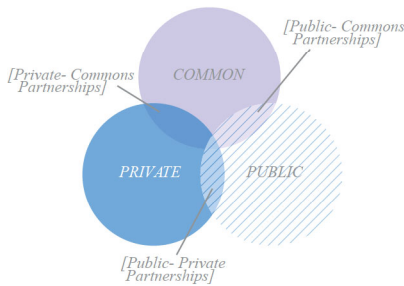
Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

Common

Hardware
Public Areas, Public Infrastructure, Industiral Land Use.

Software
Programs: Entertainment, Arts and Culture, Commercial, Community Services, Neighborhood-serving commercials, Food and Beverage, Public Housing, Cafes, Sports, Eduation, Library, Government, Religious Institutions.

Orgware
Mixed-use, Residential, Commercial, Urban Open Space.

Private

Hardware
Walk-in Camp area, Private Infrastructure.

Software
Walk-in Camp area, Private Infrastructure, Building, Footprints, Transit, Bounderies.

Orgware
Ownership: Private, Semi-private, Least Private.

Public

Hardware
Roads, Sidewalks, Parks, Public Infrastructure,Public Transportation, Theme Camp, Art Installation

Software
Access: Roads and Highways, Open Spaces, Green Spaces, Bus Stops.

Orgware
Ownership: Public, Semi-public, Least Public.

Transect Axonometric at the Block and Street Scale
Chak Ying Wong & Mengxian He
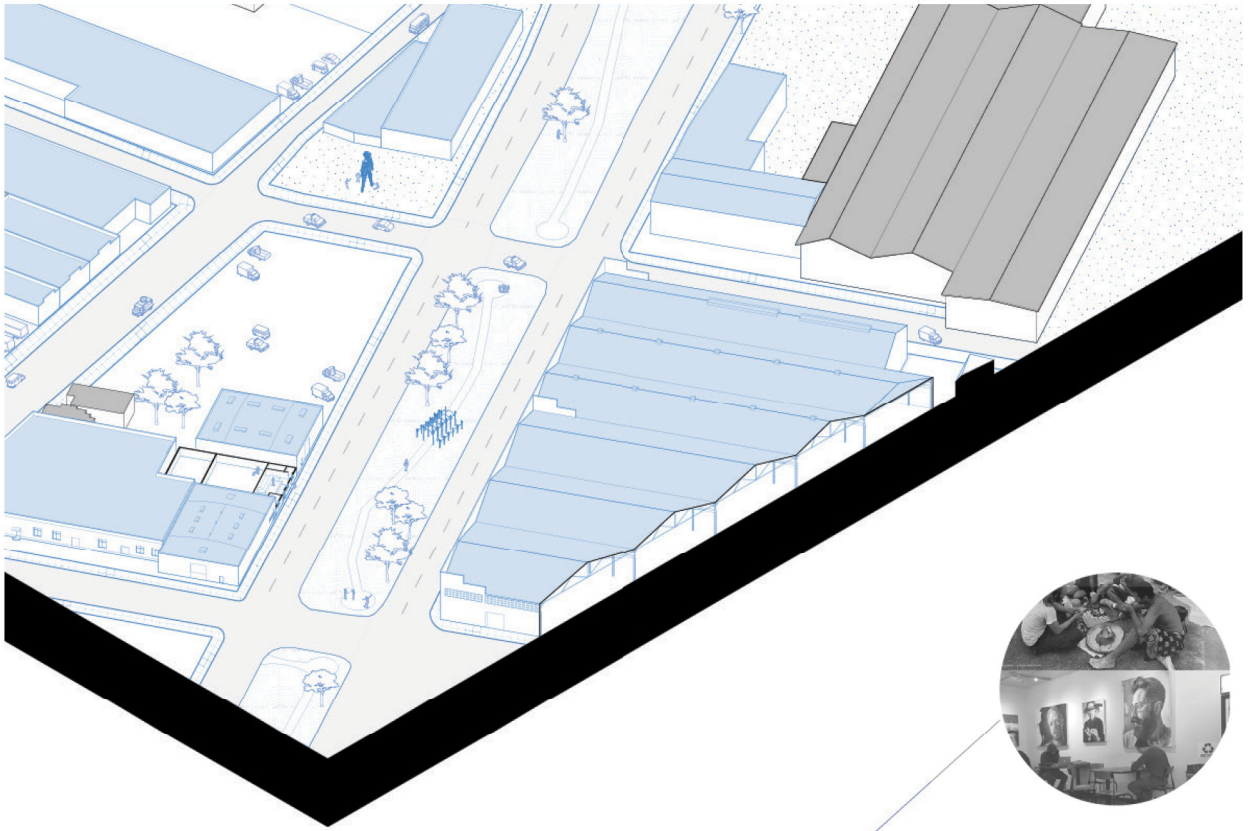
West Oakland- Street Scale Axonometric
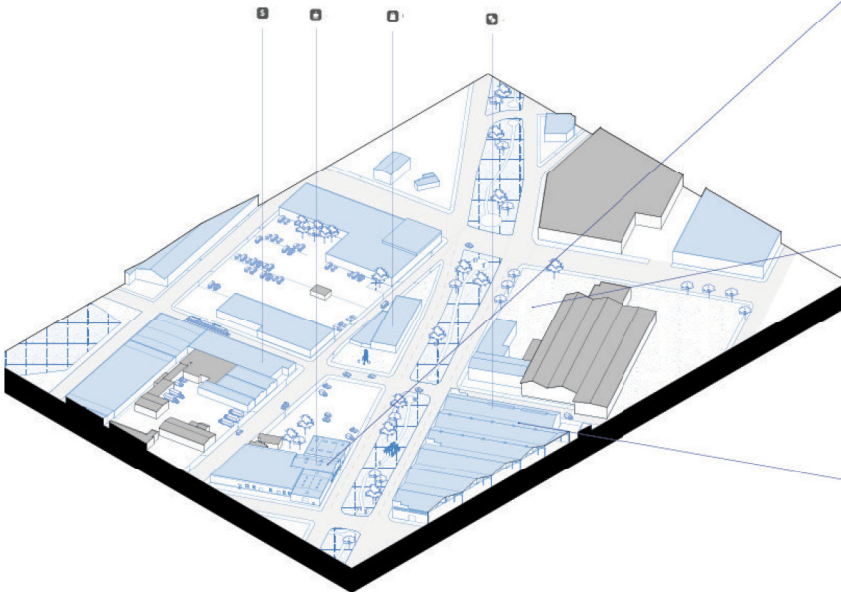
West Oakland- Block Scale Axonometric

1 Radical Self-reliance

2 Self-services

3 Common Goal

4 Intentional Creative
Community

5 A High Watermark of
Civilization

6 Housing Experiments

Street Scale Axonometric

The floorplan shows the industrial zoning of PDR (Production, Distribution and Repair) district in West Oakland space. It is commonly used for areas involving businesses and manufacturing.

Block Scale Axonometric

The infrastructure around the American Steel building is an art cluster itself. For example, a cafe in West Oakland matches the Center camp in Burning Man. Artists work in the warehouses, they display and store their artworks in the open space, and manufacturers offer essential materials for them. This is the way of addressing the ground floor of the city as a common good.

Creative Sharing Community:

Burning Man has a significant impact on this community, giving people permission to experiment, think of possibilities and also apply them to problem-solving. Instead of buying stuff from other areas, people build things themselves - by making stuff, by tinkering and inventing and building. Consumption and production happen here at the same time.

BLACK ROCK CITY, NV & OAKLAND, CA

BURNING MAN & PDR IN WEST OAKLAND

| CONTEXT | HISTORY | COMMONS | ENTERPRISE | COMMUNITY | BUSINESSES |

BURNING MAN & PDR IN WEST OAKLAND: A LIVING HISTORY
HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ITS ORIGINS.

IDENTITY OF BURNING MAN & PDR in WEST OAKLAND:
HOW THEY BUILD THEIR IDENTITY AND NAME.

THE HANGOUTS: LEGENDARY GATHERING PLACES. WHAT
PLACES YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT.

Burning Man & PDR in West Oakland: A Living History

" Festival uprising of rebels who temporarily liberate an area from state control and market logic"

Burning Man: Burning Man is not a festival. It is a community. A temporary city. It has been located in Black Rock City since 1997. The city's area is about 5.7 square miles; The circle of streets is about 1.8 miles in diameter; The Man is about a half mile from center camp. The city has a airport, post office, DMV, a temple, an official radio station (in addition to others), a recycling center, city information and greeting stations, a café, and a newspaper.

TOP: AERIAL PHOTO OF BLACK ROCK CITY. *Source: Burning Man Organization.*
BOTTOM: WEST OAKLAND. *Source: New Haven Historical Society,Yale Dily News.*

"Making Way for 'Makers': talent, culture, innovation, beauty, and diversity"

In the 50's and the 60's, when an industrial boom filled the shipyard with good jobs, many blacks came from the south and settled in West Oakland. People called it the second Gold Rush. Since then, the neighborhood has undergone seismic changes. Once a hub for movements like the Black Panther Party and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the low rent and proximity to San Francisco has more recently attracted a young creative class.
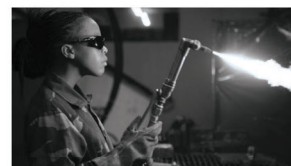

Image: A young woman gets fired up at a Gear Girls welding workshop at The Crucible in West Oakland. Recently the City of Oakland launched Oakland Makers, together with partner institutions including Maker Faire, Oakland Museum of California, Laney City College, The Crucible (an industrial arts training center), American Steel Studios, NIMBY (a local DIY industrial workspace), and individual artists and entrepreneurs. *Source: PDR Manufacturing.*

American Steel, which once housed a repair shop for cargo ships, is one of a handful of artist-run warehouses. The Crucible, a nonprofit organization in a former paper-tube factory, and the 10,000-square-foot LoBot Gallery have also been reborn as community arts spaces. Source: American Steel Strudios, The New York Times.


Item Kehlani Mural. Created by Timothy B, the Artist
The dust filled art festival, and communal living experience is filled with incredible installations, fantastical events, and creative individuals known as "burners." Radical self-expression is what drives thousands of artists from all over the world to present their work at what is arguably the most intriguing and powerful cultural event in the world.

What is needed to grow local maker, do-it-yourself enterprises into frofitable, job-genrating firms?

For starters: supportive land-supply policies (such as Oakland, California's 2005 Industrial Land Policy, which maintains that industrial land is a scarcity in Oakland, thereby supporting industrial land general plan retention policies), appropriate zoning, business-friendly regulation, and local government support.

Artist Duane Flatmo's "Tin Pan Dragon," 2006, is composed of baking trays and other tin pans. Photographed by Libby Weiler.

Experimentation, collaboration and creativity infuse the more than 300 art installations that spring up at Burning Man. One of the Oakland studios behind these iconic sculptures, for instance, is the Crucible, an industrial arts education enclave that creates jewelry, costumes, paintings and even some large "mutant!" altered vehicles for the playa.

"Opportunities in West Oakland":

SMIRNOFF #LOVEWINS HEART
The #LoveWins heart was part of Smirnoff's 2017 EDC activation. *Source: SMA Event*

HYBYCOZO – BURNING MAN 2015
The work thrives at art and music festivals, galleries, as interior design pieces, in urban environments, or as landscape elements. Absolutely beautiful! Source: HYBYCOZO by Yelena Filipchuk & Serge Beaulieu

Launching a Makers and Manufacturing Cluster in Oakland:

The aim is to celebrate and promote the city as an international destination for industrial arts, innovation, and production. Oakland industrial artists and manufacturers, such as contractors, metal workers and fabricators, industrial designers and artisans, smiths, and food producers share a century-long history in Oakland.

Industrial Arts in Oakland:

The Crucible: In 2003, The Crucible opened its 56,000-sq-ft facility in West Oakland on 7th Street, becoming the nation's largest industrial arts nonprofit.

SMA Events : SMA Events, also known as Sheet Metal Alchemist, create experiences and spaces visitors will remember. There are art displays can be found around Oakland, most notably, the Smirnoff heart located at 7th West restaurant and bar.

Form & Reform: Jon Sarriugarte has been involved in the Burning Man and La Machine for a long time.

HYBYCOZO: HYBYCOZO, the Hyperspace Bypass Construction Zone, is a series of large scale installations and artworks that investigate geometric exploration through light, shadow, and perception. See their most recent public art installation in Oakland on 27th St and Telegraph.

Makers and traditional manufacturers share similar physical needs for land, space, power, and tolerance for industrial operational attributes.

The need for industrial land protections is critical and will encourage alliances between the creative maker entrepreneurism and scaled-up industrial production. This effort is being rallied by the newly formed national association, the Urban Manufacturing Alliance. Friendly new industry will grow our middle class jobs, spark American ingenuity, and boost our global competitiveness.

1

BURNING MAN & PDR IN WEST OAKLAND

CREATIVE SHARING COMMUNITY

CONTENTS

1

Creative Sharing Community

West Oakland

Creative Sharing Community brings artists and PDF of West Oakland together to stimulate innovative thinking and for new practices to create artworks like sculptures to the community and Burning Man Festival.

1

WHO?

2

Creative Sharing Community

Creative Sharing Community which is a promote Utopian representation of the Utopian City-Burning Man, achieves the goal by integrating creative process and spaces into the West Oakland and activate the creativity of the city.

2

WHERE?

4

Bringing Burning Man into the Community

Man into the

...Percent (LUTE) of the General Plan ... designation to the West Oakland. This ... industries and anticipate new technologies, ...search and development, low impact, ...mercial operations. It brings opportunities to the art career in this community.

4

HOW?

3

Creative Studios

American Steel Studios is a collective of artists and entrepreneurs working in a wide range of mediums and industries, from large scale industrial art and fashion, furniture and lighting design, to painting, photography, sculpture, and architectural fabrication.

3

5

Making art is not self-indulgent; it's a gift to others, an act of service to the community

Making art is not self-indulgent; it's a gift to others, an act of service to the community. Creativity, after all, is at the very core of our being, the essence of life itself. Art encourages empathy, educates us and elicits dialogue. It makes us feel. The presence of art in our daily lives is a reminder of who we are, what we come from and where we are going. It would behoove all cities to embrace, support and nurture artists in their communities for the betterment of all.

5

10 Principles of Burning Man

PRINCIPLES:

1. Radical Inclusion
2. Gifting
3. Decommodification
4. Radical Self-reliance
5. Radical Self-expression
6. Communal Effort
7. Civic Responsibility
8. Leaving No Trace
9. Participation
10. Immediacy

4 Principles of Oakland Makers' activities

PRINCIPLES:

1. People:
Increase visibility and recognition of the creativity, innovation, diversity, and productivity of Oakland Makers.

2. Place:
Enhance opportunities for establishing space, expanding and modernizing facilities, and influencing local decision makers by engaging in land-use planning.

3. Products:
Initiate and promote "Oakland-made" product certification and labeling.

4. Prosperity:
Incubate, support, and grow Oakland Maker businesses. Create opportunities for exploration of the creative arts, technical trades, and apprenticeship programs for young adults in manufacturing.

Angel Island State Park

Marina Blvd
North Point St
Chestnut St
Filbert St
MARINA DISTRICT
NORTH BEACH
CHINATOWN
The Embarcadero
Battery St
Scott St
Fillmore St
Laguna St
Franklin St
Hyde St
Jones St
Sacramento St
California St
Japantown
Sutter St
Vallejo St
Larkin St
Geary St
Bush St
WESTERN ADDITION
Fulton St
Laguna St
Webster St
Mission St
Howard St
Folsom St
SAN FRANCISCO
Market St
15th St
17th St
Noe St
Castro St
Church St
Dolores St
MISSION DISTRICT
21st St
22nd St
24th St
25th St
Clipper St
Sanchez St
Harrison St
Bryant St
Alabama St
Folsom St
Potrero Ave
16th St
Mariposa St
POTRERO DISTRICT
Kansas St
Indiana St
Illinois St
Townsend St
4th St
7th St
3rd St
2nd St

San Jose Ave
James Lick Fwy
Bayshore Blvd
Excelsior
San Jos
Alemany Blvd
Paris St
Naples St
Felton St
Bacon St
San Bruno Ave
Rolph St
BAYSHORE
John McLaren Park
Jerrold Ave
Oakdale Ave
Evans Ave
Hudson Ave
BAYVIEW DISTRICT
Innes Ave
Ingalls St
Carroll Ave
Crisp Rd
Cortland Ave
Candlestick Point State Rec Area
San Bruno Mountain State Park
BRISBANE
Valley Dr
Tunnel Ave
Carter St

101

Treasure Island

Bay Brg
80
Burma Rd
Maritime St
Frontage Rd
San Francisco Bay
Alameda Harbor Bay Fry
Alameda-Oakland Fry
Middle Harbor Rd
Middle Harbor Shoreline Park
Monarch St
W Midway Ave
W Tower Ave
Buena Vista Ave
Lincoln Ave
Santa Clara Ave
Central Ave
Robert Crown Memorial State Beach
South San Francisco-East Bay Fry

SOUTH BERKELEY
10th St
Channing Way
Dwight Way
Haste St
Parker St
Ward St
Oregon St
Adeline St
Woolsey St
65th St
63rd St
Alcatraz Ave
Shattuck Ave
Telegraph Ave
Powell St
55th St
45th St
123
EMERYVILLE
Martin Luther King Jr Way
San Pablo Ave
Market St
34th St
29th St
Peralta St
Adeline St
Webster St
80
W Grand Ave
West Oakland
WEST OAKLAND
OAKLAND
7th St
8th St
9th St
2nd St
Nimitz Fwy

Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA

PROJECTS

Japantown

The Many Faces of Japantown
Interview with Rosalyn Tonai, Glynis Nakahara, Jeremy Chan

Commons Village
Maria Antonieta Ramirez Perez & Valeriya Velyka

Hidden Japantown
Chak Ying Wong & Mengxian (Karen) He

Excelsior

Dreaming a Restorative Future for All
Interview with Maribel A. Ramirez and George Turner

Trans-Mission Activation
Jason Gonzalez & Savannah Lindsey

West Oakland

A Seat at the Table
Interview with Ms. Margaret Gordon and Gina Bugiada

The Ripple Effect
Sanyukta Bhagwat

Alleys to Allies
Yun-Yun (Nicole) Kuo

Seam
Geada Alagha & Lulu Wang

"I feel like every time the community feels listened to, there is something restorative about that. Every little measure of that contributes to healing and moving forward."

- Glynis Nakahara

Japantown
The Many Faces of Japantown

Glynis Nakahara
Vice President of Japantown Task Force Board of Directors
Rosalyn Tonai
Executive Director of the National Japanese American Historical Society
Jeremy Chan
Board Member of the Japantown Task Force
In conversation with Christopher Roach and Julia Grinkrug

"San Francisco's Japantown holds a long history dating back to the time Japanese immigrants first set foot onto the mainland in 1860, through redevelopment in the 1960s, and up to the present day"[1]. The complex history of Japantown is also a testament to ruthless urban redevelopment and one of the most aggressive urban displacements in the region. The mechanics of structural racism were wielded against both Japanese-American and African-American communities, and led to a complete erasure of more than 40 urban blocks of unique historical significance and double displacement of hundreds of families who were calling this neighborhood a home and nurtured a highly rich and diverse cultural life. These top-down changes are represented with equal boldness in the neighborhood's demographics, built fabric, and cultural heritage, including street and neighborhood names as well as its economic and cultural institutions. Local grassroots organizations such as the Japantown Task Force are tirelessly working "on revitalizing and preserving Japantown, a community of culture, tradition, and history."[2]

[1] From the Website of the Japantown Task Force, Economic Development, Planning & Preservation of Japantown San Francisco. https://www.japantowntaskforce.org/

In this post-studio interview, three prominent and enthusiastic members of JTF discuss their experiences of partnering with Common Ground studio on co-visioning strategic and innovative approaches that balance cultural and historic preservation with community healing and revitalization that is aligned with emergent shifts of the local economy and broader cultural trends.

EMBODIED HISTORY

Julia Grinkrug: To start, could you please introduce yourself and your role in the wider mission of your organization?

Rosalyn Tonai: Sure! My name is Rosalyn Tonai, and I am the executive director of the National Japanese American Historical Society. What my colleagues and I share in common is that we are all on the board of the Japantown Task Force.

Rosaln Tonai

We call ourselves *Ninjahs* (National Japanese American Historical Society: NJAHS). We come from a place of understanding the past so we can influence the future, taking a proactive approach to understanding history and applying it. That is very relevant when it comes to World War Two history and understanding the Japanese American incarceration as well as the redevelopment in the past 40-50 years. Through this lens, we take a look at the context of the government's intrusion into our lives. We follow the change over the course of history through the lens of a personal impact. Certainly the conflict of WWII, but also the impacts of Eminent Domain, urban renewal and redevelopment. Their government strategies affected the marginalized communities, such as Japanese Americans returning to their homes in Japantown as well as their neighbors - the African Americans of Western Addition. There are many lessons to be learned.

Given the issue of power, civil liberties and all sorts of thematic elements, we want the students and observers to understand, through the physical and environmental settings, the relationships that occured. We try to work together to see the big stroke of this historical context and try to find solutions to that. There is a lot of trauma, intergenerational trauma in this community, which is important to acknowledge as there is a lot of denial, and on top of that, there is a sense that everything's okay on the surface. Part of it is the silence of denial, and part of it is the lack of understanding. However, it is also a way of cultural adaptation, adapting the traditional norms of Japanese culture, embedded in

the interpersonal relationships, to the contemporary norms and way of life.

There is a lot of trauma, intergenerational trauma, in this community, which is important to acknowledge as there is a lot of denial, and on top of that, there is a sense that everything's okay on the surface.

Students, as aspiring architects, need to get into the community to start learning and seeing these nuances and understand them through non-verbal communications.

Jeremy Chan: My name is Jeremy Chan, and I am a board member of the Japantown Task Force. I was a former intern at the National Japanese American Historical Society and that is where I first started giving cultural and historical walking tours of Japantown.

Evacuation of Japanese from Japantown 1942

With the tours, one of our goals is to highlight a lot of the background of the Japantown neighborhoods that aren't obvious. Most people only focus their energy on the malls and much less further away towards Bush Street. People would not go there if they don't have a specific reason for it. One of the activities I incorporate, partially to draw people further away from the malls, is "the wall activity", which is also a favorite of mine. It is a little cheesy, but at the same time, I also think it can be a powerful experience if the audience is willing.

For the activity, I line people up with their backs against the wall of the Japanese Language School; I ask them to close their eyes and ask them to imagine that they are at home while minding their business. Then, they hear a loud knock at the door where armed guards with bayonets say that they must leave immediately and can only take what they can carry with them. Then, I ask the participants to ponder what they would take with them at that moment and what they would have to leave behind.

Tying it back to the project, I definitely think that students really took that to heart. I could see that both projects reflected elements that were highlighted during the tour.

Image: Dorothea Lange, San Francisco, California, April 25, 1942. (National Archives). From "Then They Came For Me. ncarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties" https://thentheycame.org/

Glynis Nakahara: I think that through the deep understanding of history, and the experiential activity that Jeremy leads, both Jeremy and Rosalyn shed light on how important it is for urban designers and architects to understand the community and the people that they're developing for.

TRAUMA / INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS

JG: In the context of connecting past to present and future, how do you see the importance of understanding trauma as a significant element of the community, and how can it be represented in the built environment and everyday lives?

GN: Even though it happened a long time ago, there is trauma that still lives in the individuals and certainly in the community. Healing from this trauma is not obvious and nobody knows what the recipe is, but I think that it is a big part of the future development of Japantown. Successful development moving forward is to acknowledge this and to integrate the idea of how to heal into the fabric of the development itself.


Glynis Nakahara

RT: Having worked in the community for over 30 years, and having to deny this trauma, I think there is deep distrust of the government and the authority to the point that it's institutionalized. There are some folks in the community that will never take any city money or funding because it's tainted with the obligation for a government they don't trust. But some of us, as practitioners, have to deal with government officials, often with suspicion: "what is it there for me?". And there is a competition for funding and "survival of the fittest" mentality. This doesn't have to work that way. One should learn from the past to influence the future.

There were "stooges," so to speak, in the Holocaust community and certainly in Japanese American Community, and these riffs exist today. People question: "How dare you cooperating with the government that is complicit in sending people to the camps?" But in the same way, if you had a gun to your head and were held hostage, *"what are you going to do to survive?"*. All of this complexity must be reckoned with.

RT: The other thing I want to say is that out of that trauma comes the realization that knowing the truth will set you free. I believe that if you tell the truth, the wounds can heal.

"Out of that trauma comes the realization that knowing the truth will set you free. I believe that if you tell the truth, the wounds can heal."

There's a frame to that, and a cathartic feeling to that. So, how do you translate that into architecture is interesting. Perhaps it is that sense of open space; the sense that you can remain silent and meditate to contemplate what life is about. It can mean different things: what you see is not always there. There is a role for art in framing the truth and communicating it. For example, in the photograph of the wall, military folks were marching residents to their confinement.
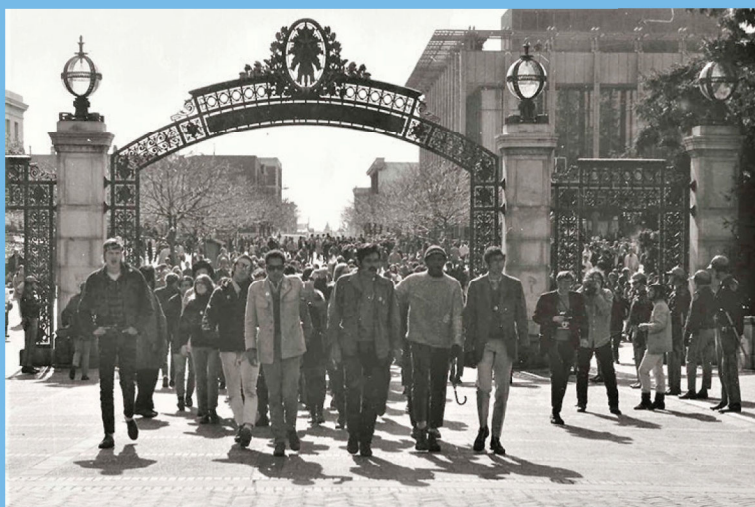
Third World Liberation Front strike in Berkeley, 1969

Captured by the photographer, Dorothea Lange, who knew intimately what she had to capture. It's not going to be pretty pictures per se. She wanted to capture that thing of the authority figure of the bayonet guy. And that's pretty much how the incarceration went - people obeyed. They obeyed the authority thinking that this is the right way to do - this is the American way to do this. And that translates to how people act in the community - that we need to be good citizens, we need to participate, we need to vote. But also we need to be aware that we can be used, we can be run over. So we need to fight.

The fighting comes probably from the 60s and the 70s, around the rise of the Anti-War movement that followed the Vietnam War, as well as the Watergate Hearings, which changed the course of how we trust the government; and the Vietnam War as well as the Watergate Hearings. Out of that came the Redress Movement, and the Third World strike at SF State and UC Berkeley that was going against the service system, demanding to change the system. And that means changing architecture too, that sentiment was universal.

Image: Oliver Jones (beige jacket and sunglasses) was at the leading edge of the 1969 Third World Liberation Front strike in Berkeley that led to the founding of the Department of Ethnic Studies. (Photo courtesy of Oliver Jones) https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/02/05/the-1969-strike-at-uc-berkeley-was-just-the-beginning-of-oliver-joness-battles/

You can see that at Japantown architecture. You have the mall, which is pretty much the modernist iconoclassic Minoru Yamasaki's clean lines of the mid 60s. And then you turn across the street, to Buchanan Mall, and you have this funky design of the 70s - a throwback to Japan, addressing people's return to their roots and culture, as if they go back to Japan through this regionalist resemblance of a Japanese village; and you get this 70s-80s vibe.

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS /SENSE OF BELONGING

Christopher Roach: Do you think that the nuanced understanding of the generational difference and tensions, as well as the different timelines of the place create new interpretations of the space, expectations for the culture and the sense of belonging?

JC: That's a complex question. I think part of it is related to Japantown itself. It is like a big tent that caters to many kinds of people who interact with Japantown in different ways. Oftentimes those who interact in one way do not know of these other facets either. There are people who come for the non-profits, and others come to shop or eat. So in the end it all comes to what people are looking for in Japantown. Having said that, it is often challenging to find things that are catered to young people. I recall telling the students about the bowling alley and how everyone lamented the loss of the bowling alley as a major hangout spot.

Jeremy Chan

And I saw from the students' projects how they responded to it in different ways when they tried to activate various spaces and give more ways for people to be involved.

The other thing is what's often been talked about - that the younger generation of Japanese Americans does not have as solid of an issue as previous generations. That is true for various reasons. For example, the first generation of Japanese Americans went through the immmigration structures, and then the second generation is the one that experienced the concentration camps, and then there were the ones that were active in the Redress Movement. So, there is always this question of what is the defining issue of the fourth generation. Is there a defining issue? Is the generation monolithic and is it even meaningful to look at it that way, when you look at the recent waves of Japanese immigrants and how they respond to Japantown changes? I saw that in the student's projects - how they tried to capture the diversity of the Japanese-American community and the people who interact with it and how they chose to define the space and to address those different needs.

JG: What would you be more interested in sharing with people and designers coming to respond to Japantown?

JC: People come with an affinity for Japantown for various reasons. For me, my goal is to let people learn about the non-commercial aspects, such as the history of the neighborhood, or visit the small

businesses that may be off the beaten track of the malls. Most of the time, including with the students, I was able to see them embrace that aspect. Even if people came following the interest from one angle, they embrace other facets once they discover them. I see it as a kind of strategy for the community moving forward. Certain things can be a gateway of getting involved in the community.

> *Even if people came following one interest, they embrace other facets once they discover them. I see it as a kind of strategy for the community moving forward. Certain things can be a gateway of getting involved in the community.*

Another example was when I was involved with the Japanese American Club at Berkeley where people who joined were interested in Anime and Japanese pop culture. They came for the interest but stayed for the community. I started studying Japanese, because I was interested in Pokémon and video games. Dance groups can also be such a gateway. People come to dance and just be with other people and then they get involved and discover other community aspects as well. It was great to see that with the students as well. They started with one angle and then their interest expanded.

ACADEMY AS A BRIDGE

CR: Going back to the foundational issues of trauma and distrust, how did you experience unpacking the complex questions with students, from an academic institution that is not affiliated with the government, played out?

RT: Students are like an open book or a portal to understand the world because they came from different areas of the world. Japantown comes up as a portal for them as well. Students are open to new ideas, new experiences and creating a new sense of community too. for that, Japantown has become its medium for sensing a new community and another world. And just their presence of being able to listen and be engaged, going on the walking tours, that creates a tremendous learning experience. Those are lasting experiences because they are in their formative years that build up towards your identity.

GN: I think connecting with the students is a lot easier for the community than someone from the planning department for the reasons that we talked about. So I think there is a lot of potential there in terms of connecting and creating an authentic communication. There is not that *wall* there and the trust issue is

significantly diminished.

IDENTITY / GATEWAYS

RT: One thing about Japantown is that it creates a new sense of identity, strangers meet each other and that creates a sense of community. We're lucky that people want to be here. There is something about the openness, and probably the Peace Plaza also helps, that creates an invitation, gathering people into space. Hopefully, we can create a greater sense of community and excitement despite the challenges, such as COVID and economic hardships, recreating this exciting vibe.

For example Jeremy, he's so modest, has created this whole new organization of young people that perform together in unison and have a great time - Yosakoi dance team. There are groups throughout the country that are working on Yosakoi dance, meeting online and trying to create that new movement. Everyone can dance in uniform and in unison throughout the world. This sense of movement through space in your bedroom, and outdoors is really an exciting thing. It expands our understanding of space, open space and confined space. It also creates a new sense of community, because there are so many non-*Nisei* (non-Japanese Americans) who are involved. They have that sense of identity of being together in this cultural phenomenon. That's really interesting. Then, what is the *Nisei* identity? Do you have to be racially or ethnically tied to being Japanese? It's up to people to sort of define that for themselves.

Then, what is the Nisei identity? Do you have to be racially or ethically tied to being Japanese? It's up to people to sort of define that for themselves.

GN: I have a thought about the dance in relation to identity. Coming from Hawaii, I have always been fascinated by the Hawaiian dance Hula. Hawaiians didn't have a written language until the Europeans arrived, so Hula has been the same thing as language knowledge and history. Everything is passed down through the Hula. Hula IS Hawaiian culture. Not a lot of people have exposure to ancient Hula and are only familiar with its modern iteration. But I think that Hula played a pivotal role in cultural preservation. When I was growing up in Hawaii, it was so rare for me to hear anyone speaking Hawaiian. Now, there's the Merrie Monarch festival and a revival of language and culture. I think that Hula played an instrumental role in it and I find this really fascinating. The other wonderful thing about the Hula is that it is very accessible, so you have people in Japan that have Hula Hālau. I always admire Hula's ability to bring people from all different cultures in and to be able to identify with Hawaiian culture. Maybe that's a model for Japantown.

I always admire Hula's ability to bring people from all different cultures in and to be able to identify with Hawaiian culture. Maybe that's a model for Japantown.

SF Japantown Lantern Parade Festival/Bon Odori Dance, 2010

RT: As a matter of fact, all Japanese American pilgrimages usually start or end with a Bon dance in a circle. That sense of community and getting together in movement in uniformity, that group cohesion really casts something for anybody. Everyone is supposed to participate. That's one of the things they do in the Peace Plaza, a circular thing. We need to get back to doing it and people having a good time. Bon dance has Buddhist origins but folklore influences as well, marking the harvest festival. Yosakoi is a fishermen dance, right? When they pull their ropes?

GN: Yes, but it evolves! If you go to Japan, in Osaka station, there is a humongous Obon dance. The scale is impossible to believe! And you see the elderly ladies in the circle on the stage dancing, but they're dancing to Lady Gaga! It's hilarious and terrific! But it's never really taken hold like that here.

And you see the elderly ladies in the circle on the stage dancing, but they're dancing to Lady Gaga! It's hilarious and terrific!

CR: But that mashup and that layering of cultures and re-interpretations of cultures, old and new, and mis-interpretations… This is what, to me, Japantown has been about. To Jeremy's point about multiple entry points, that's why there are so many facets and layers that it offers.

TAKEAWAYS

JG: Moving forward in our conversation, I'm curious to hear what were some successful elements of communication that you felt created a connection? What can we take from this experience and see as a model for future studios?

JC: I could see the evolution of students' projects in response to community feedback; like in example of a sky bridge project that changed direction significantly. I think it does speak to the fact that the students took the feedback that they heard from community members very seriously. They adjusted the project and as a result, they totally revamped that part of it and came up with other ways to interact with different spaces in Japantown. I do want to credit the students for incorporating the feedback from the conversations.

GN: Understanding the community and their feedback is not an easy task and can be exhausting. It took me years to build this skill. But having an experience of getting into a very intimate level with the community members and walking through the spaces - those kinds of authentic experience are very meaningful and I think it would be terrific if this kind of learning becomes a basic component in the curriculum.

RT: The best thing is this immersion; organically interacting with people, getting together, sitting down to talk, sharing their story, and essentially playing with blocks, creating something together. I think that this immersive experience and the layering of the thinking process, exchanging ideas of the students and the community, create one collective thing that everyone feels they are part of. I think that only then it becomes successful.

GN: One thing that I just thought of is that even if it's not a service sanctioned by a formal planning and design effort, such interaction has an impact. I feel like every time the community feels listened to, there is something restorative about that. Every little measure of that contributes to healing and moving forward.

I feel like every time the community feels listened to, there is something restorative about that. Every little measure of that contributes to healing and moving forward.

RT: And this sense of empowerment is very significant because we don't have the voting block, because we don't have the numbers and we need to build a coalition. It's a pretty exciting time for us because I think Japantown is still on the path of development. There

are still potential developers that want to see this neighborhood grow and densify.

GN: It's interesting you say that, Ros, because even in the short time between last year's project, and this one, there was a movement towards acknowledgement of future development. I think that the housing crisis has played a role in it, adding significance to the legislation, which has been passed. I'm sure there's more to come around. Facilitating development, particularly of affordable housing and transportation, as well as long term planning will affect Japantown. The Community seems to be opening up to potential development.

RT: But, I think the problem with the development and the limited area is displacement, no question. Even if the development happens in stages it is going to displace businesses and then it's going to come in with new modern space. Rent will go up - this is sort of a natural law of economics, and then how can we build in subsidies?

You often get a big developer coming in, and they promise a cultural center or a common space area. But in result you get displacement. That is sort of what has happened in Oakland, but if you want to counter that, how will you subsidize affordability and anti displacement?

GN: It'll be interesting to see what happens because I always feel like the most healthy and sustainable development is the development over time. Massive development is so violent and all the things you mentioned Ros. To me, that's the big elephant in the room. No one has talked about it because I don't think anybody has a real solution for those issues.

Japantown SF Buchanan Mall.

Commons Village

Maria Antonieta Ramirez Perez & Valeriya Velyka

San Francisco's Japantown, also known as Nihonmachi, is located in the Western Addition between Geary and Sutter St. The existing "ground" of Japantown is expressed a rigid organization of cultural assets, with a hierarchy of public access. A better understanding of the relationships among seemingly disconnected systems and spatial conditions, will facilitate an activation of the ground floor. The scope of our work represents the history, present and potential future of Japantown.

Today, a typical walk through Japantown's historic six blocks contains spacious sidewalks, vibrant signage, and a range of aromas from savory to sweet. The open courtyard plaza with a striking five-tiered Peace Pagoda hosts events year round. Underneath it's welcoming appearance there is a history of repeated injustices. After the Japanese Attack on Pearl harbor, Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps whether or not they were American citizens. Even though some Japanese-American families were able to return after WW2, they were yet again displaced 2 decades later due to redevelopment, together with thousands of African Americans, who settled the area since then. Despite these challenges, the community persevered and created organizations to preserve Japantown and its unique identity.

This project rethinks the typology of the mall by addressing the idea of the "commons". The practice of commoning is typically facilitated by the users through active participation. Theses commons play a big role in social infrastructure through unique forms of co-ownership and co-governance. Our vision for Japantown wishes to provide a partnership platform for the local business, while creating meaningful spaces for community empowerment. The project aspires to achieve this goal through business assistance, art incubators and activation of the public space through green access.

Commons Village
Three Grounds Analysis
Site: Japantown SF

JAPAN CENTER MALL

Bush St.

Post St.

Geary St.

Fillmore St.

Webster St.

TIRE SHOP

CLINIC

RETIREMENT HOME

NON-PROFIT

RETIREMENT HOME

LIBRARY

RELIGIOUS

RELIGIOUS

RETIREMENT HOME

CONSULATE

CONDOMINIUM

YMCA

HOME AUDIO STORE

CLINIC

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LEARNING CENTER

RELIGIOUS

RECREATION CENTER

PHARMACY AND FOOD

RELIGIOUS

RELIGIOUS

SAFEWAY

YMCA

COMMON

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

[Private- Commons Partnerships]

[Public- Commons Partnerships]

[Public- Private Partnerships]

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

1 Western Addition

2 Internment detainees, 1942

3 Japanese Evacuation, 1942

4 Peace Plaza & Buchanan St

5 Unique Retail

6 Japanese Owned Restaurant

Urban Analysis, Japantown SF

Commons Village
Collage and Ideo-logic Diagrams

Japantown SF Vision Collage

Cultural Production
Japantown

Japantown will continue to thrive as a culturally rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood which will continue to serve as the cultural heart of the Japanese and Japanese American communities for generations to come.

Sense of Belonging
Japantown

Cultural Consumption
Japantown

Japantown is a neighborhood in the Western Addition district of San Francisco, California. It is know to be about six square city blocks.
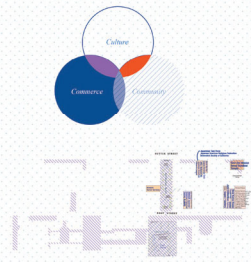
Japantown SF thrives as a rich, authentic, and economically vibrant neighborhood.

Japanese Community can feel and share a space with a sense of home for all generations.

Japantown SF is know for its six blocks that range from community services to cultural merchandise.

Ideo-logic Diagrams - design principles

Event Calendar

JAN
Japanese New Year Festival
(Oshogatsu Matsuri)

FEB
Setsubun Festival

Day of Remembrance

MARCH
Vernal Equinox Day

APRIL
Cherry Blossom Festival

MAY
Children's Day Festival

Japan Day Festival

JUNE
Soy and Tofu Festival

JULY
Japanese Obon Lantern Floating

Bon Odori

SF Anime Festival

Konko Church Garage Sale

AUG
Fold Paper at Origami Palooza

Sumo Match

Nihonmachi Street Fair

Wear a Yukata

SEP
Osaka Matsuri Festival

Japan Film Festival of San Francisco

Community Clean-Up
Jarf Curry Cook Off

OCT
Aki Matsuri Fall Festival

NOV
Labor Day Holiday
JCD Town Hall Meeting

DEC
Mochitsuki Workshops

Kimochi Silver Bells Arts and Food Faire

Business Typology

ARTS + CULTURE

Religious — All Ages
Japanese Merchandise (Anime, Kimono, etc) — All Ages
Import (Kitchen/Ceramics Paper Tree, Book store) — Adult/Senior
Recreation (Karoke) — All Ages
Martial Arts — Youth

FOOD

Bakery — All Ages
Market — All Ages
Non-Japanese (Korean) — All Ages
Japanese (Sushi, Ramen) — All Ages

WELLNESS

Non Profits, Services — Adult/Senior
Bank — Adult/Senior
Beauty (Nail and Hair) — All Ages
Health (Spa, Doctor, Acupunture) — Adult/Senior

Study Model 1, Plug- ins

Study Model 2, Modules

Study Models and Concept Development

Bush St.

Commons Village
Proposed Masterplan

Sutter St.

10B **10A** **10**
Kodomo No In the Name
Tame Ni of National
Security

9
The Spirit of
Nigonmatchi

A New Ballgame
Cultural and
Community
Center

Issei Woman's
Legacy
Nihonmachi
Little Friends

12   **11**

Buchanan St.

Konko Church

Heart & Soul
8

J-Pop Center

6
Benyodo

7
Educating
the Nisei

Internmnet Camps and
Return to Nihonmachi
13

Kimochi

Redevelopment
to Redress
14

Longisect B

Kinokuniya
Mall

Post St.

Dental Office

Kinetsu
Mall

Community
Housing

Section
Perspective A

Longisect A

5
Soko
Hardware

Uoki Sakai
Market

Hotel Kabuki

4
Miyako Mall

3

MIYAKO
MALL

HOTEL KABUKI

15
SF Japantown
Sensu

Nijya Supermarket
(Street Level)

Nijgon-Tk (Japanese
Confections &Gifts)

16
What You
Leave Behind

San Francisco
Japantown
Sensu (fan)

AMC THEATER

Kinokuniya
Bookstores

1
Section
Perspective B

2

JAPANTOWN PEACE
PLAZA

Peace Plaza

Retirement
Community

KINETSU
BUILDING

Peace
Pagoda

Section
Perspective C

Geary St.

Fillmore St.   **Webster St.**   **Laguna St.**

MUNI
Stop

PHARMACY AND FOOD

E-Bike
Station

YMCA

ELEMENTRY
SCHOOL

LEARNING
CENTER

Safeway

YMCA   SAFEWAY

RELIGIOUS

RELIGIOUS   PRESCHOOL

NON-PR

Legend

1	What Happened Here	**10a**	In the Name of National Security
2	Injustice and Honor	**10b**	Kodomo No Tame Ni
3	Uoki Sakai Market	**11**	Issei Women's Legacy
4	Commerce & Community	**12**	A New Ballgame
5	Beginnings of Japantown	**13**	Internment Camps and Return to Nihonmachi
6	Benkyodo	**14**	Redevelopment to Redress
7	Educating the Nisei	**15**	San Francisco Japantown Sensu
8	Heart and Soul	**16**	What You Leave Behind
9	The Spirit of Nihonmachi		

Map of six main blocks of Japantown SF

Blocks: Built and Open Space

Public Spine: Accesibility

Co-Grounding: Public and Private Footprint

Urban Strategy Plan

- Green Space
- Open Spaces
- Bus Stops

- Accessible Ground Floor
- Buildings
- # History Walk

*Legend for Left page

Commons Village
Massing

AMC Theater

STAGE

COMMERCE MARKET

Geary St.

B

C

01

ART INCUBATOR

Japan Center Mall

Webster St.

Peace Plaza

MEDIA WALL

D

03

F

A

HOUSING

04

Peace Plaza

Hotel Kabuki

HISTORY WALK

WORKSHOP/TRAINING

02

New People Building

Elevated Green Space

Post St.

E

GREEN ACCESS

Buchanan Street

Sutter St
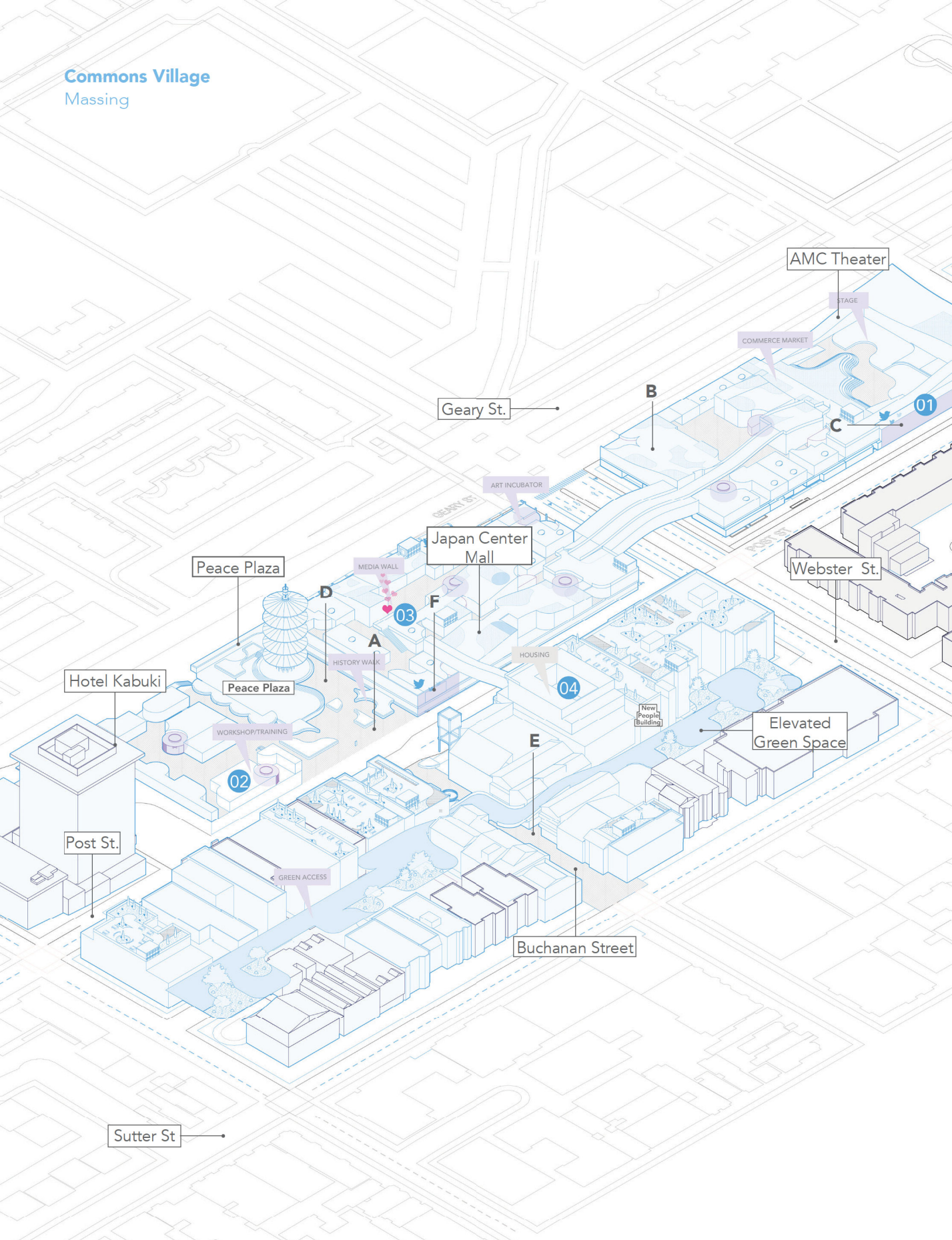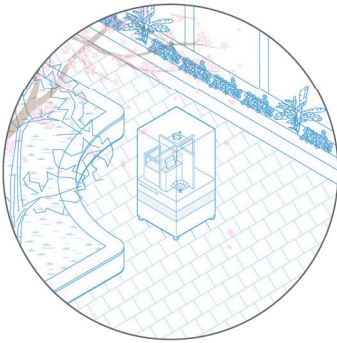
A   Micro Musem

Creates dynamic attactions for visitors and keeps them engaged. They can learn about unique objects and culture.
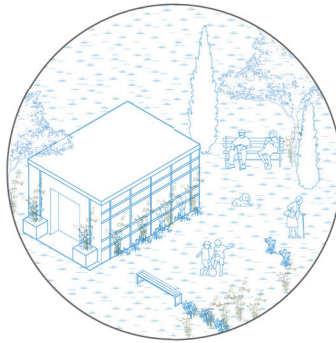
B   Roof Garden

The roof grants access to views, common uses space for activities that support community and business events.
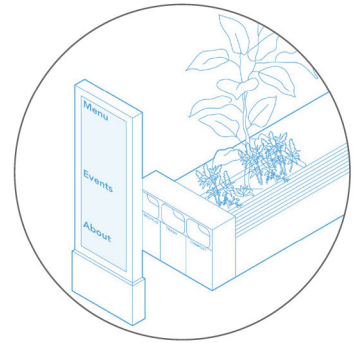
C   Wayfinding Signage

Info station for wayfinding where users have access to a maps, menus, calendars and events coming up.
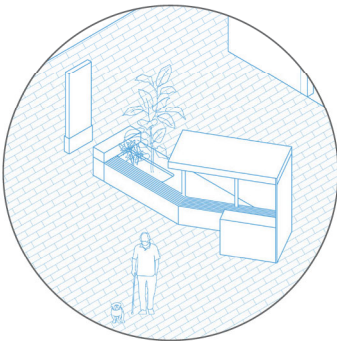
D   Market Kiosk/ Stands

Kiosks provide space for community memebers to participate in informal retail and farmers market (e.g. take-out/curiosity stands).
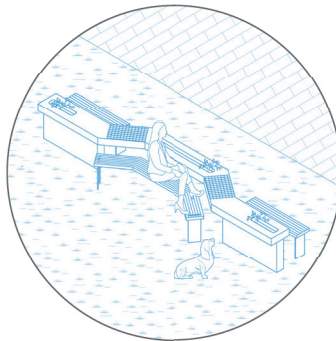
E   Street Furnishing

Outdoor seating activates the sidewalk edge zone and creates public and social life.
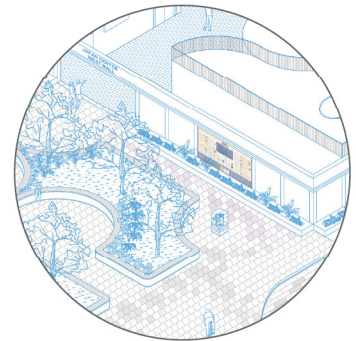
F   History Walk

The pedestrian street includes a self-guided tour with 17 spots of historical and cultural significance of the Japanese American comunity.

Urban Strategy Axonometric

We visualize the project in phases of gradual realization, starting from new housing to create density then activating commerce. The reconfiguration of the mall allows for the creation of more nodes within the network, and fosters more multi-use spaces. In addition, the porosity of the plan encourages the public to explore the other blocks of Japantown.

Immersive Street View

The proposal consists of 'three grounds', the lower parking, the commercial street and the urban roof landscape. The three levels share a dialog both visually and programmatically, creating enough space for commerce and community. The porosity of the plans challenges the modes of ownership with designated space for collaborative and temporal use. The implementation of pop-ups, wayfinding, and microevents transforms the six known blocks of Japantown into a dense social network. Anyone can experience the five senses of Japantown through art, food, music, language and green access.
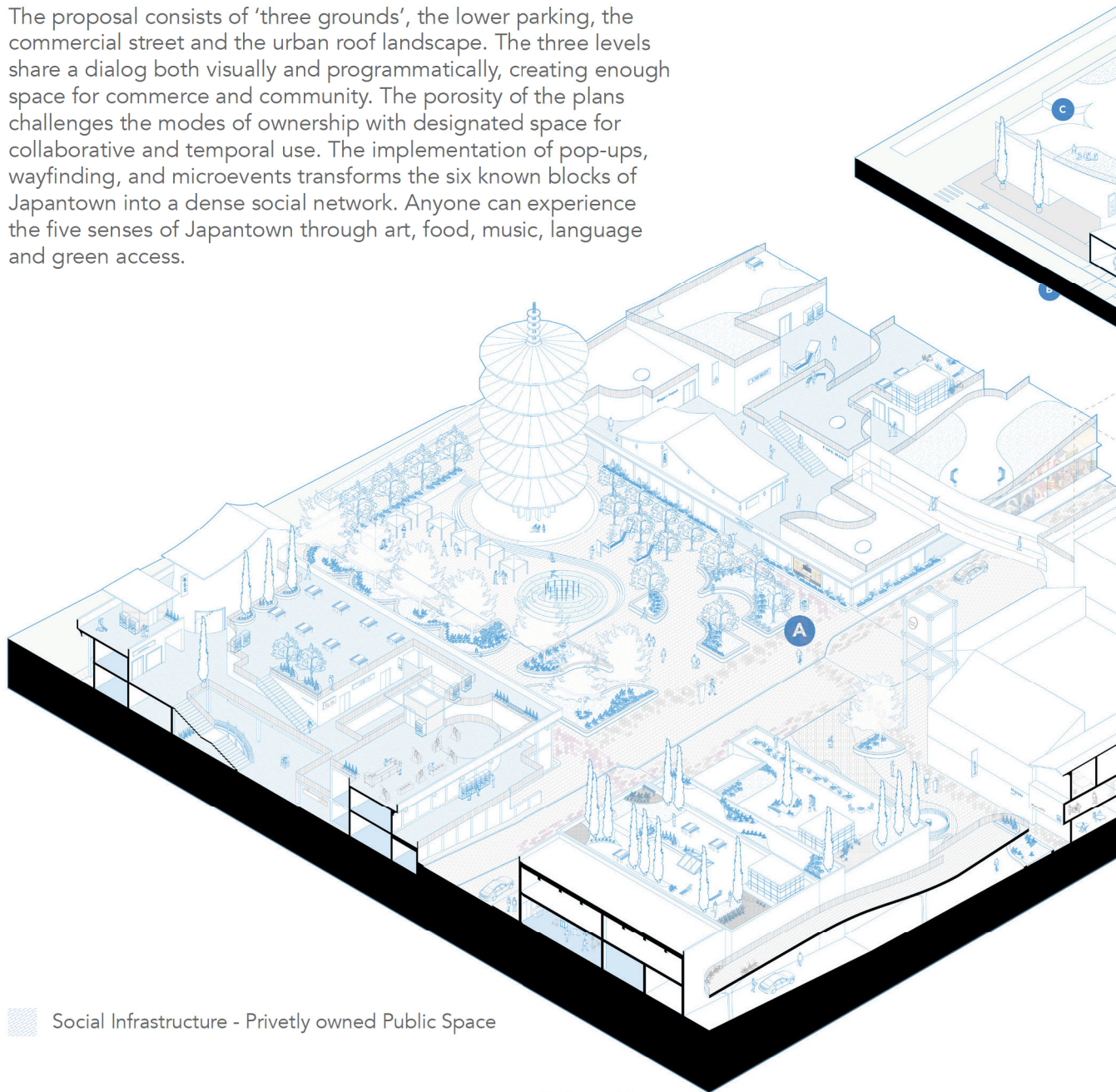
Social Infrastructure - Privtely owned Public Space

Street Realm - Pedestrian priority with access to Bikes, Delivery Vans, and Cars moving at pedestrian speed.

San Francisco Japantown History Walk- self-guided tour with 17 stops.

POST ST
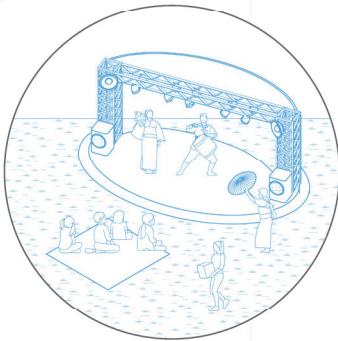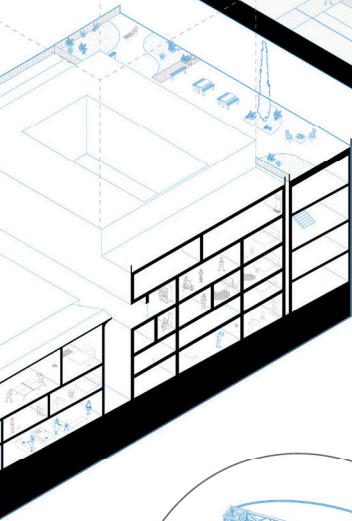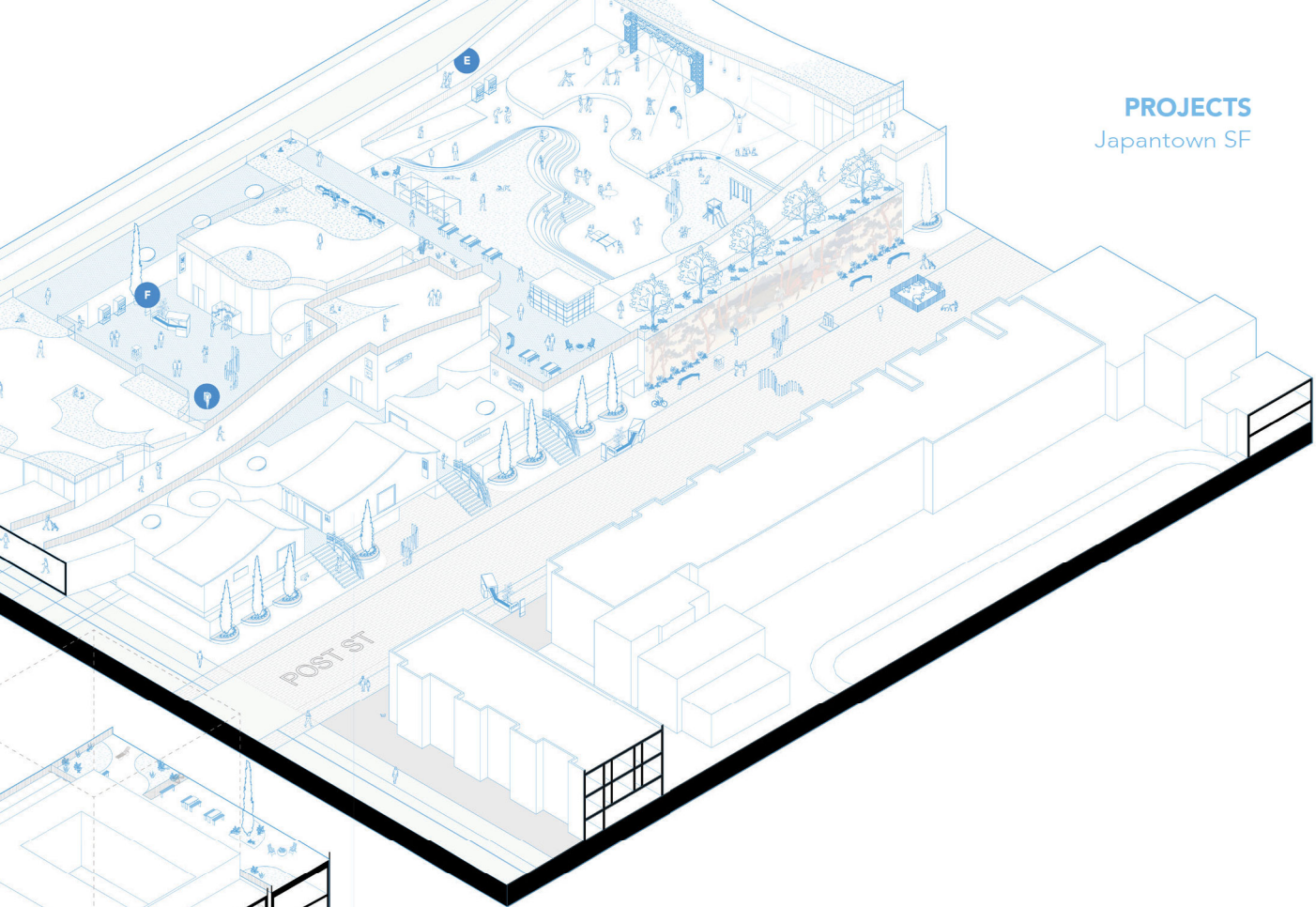
A   Micro Events

Space for Japanese Celebrations,
promotional/ holiday events,
volunteer program for residents and
non residents.
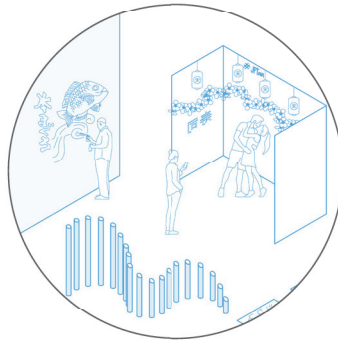
B   Visual Signs

Media wall, mural art, ground signs,
and light installations.
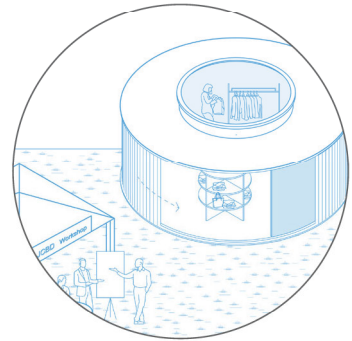
C   Pop-up Retail/Market

Farmers market and informal retail is
a way to provide access to different
businesses (e.g. food tasting and
recipe workshops).

104

In Benkyo-do Store...

We aren't making enough money to pay for rent.

Mochi & Manju Store
BENKYO-DO

SUTTER

Since 1906

OPEN

We have been open since 1906...

Maybe you can talk to the Cultural Economy Office

What is the Cultural Economy Office?

They have a funding program for individuals and organizations that contribute to Japantown as a cultural destination.

EVICTION NOTICE

RENT PAST DUE

RENT DUE

The Cultural Economy Office will evaluate your application. We support culinary arts, design, entertainment, literacy arts and humanities, preservation and visual arts and crafts.

This program will enhance partnerships and incentives to grow the number and success of events in Japantown.

Networking, Training and collaboration.

I can teach and assist about online presence.

This workhop is great to get to know different japanese businesses.

Special Events like Picnic at the Peace Plaza are really good for our businesses.

Japantown Cultural Benefit District Cultural Economy Office

Japanese American Citizens League National Headquarters

Masao W. Satow Building

WE PROTECT OUR BUSINESSES

We fight evictions!

1765

Mochi & Manju Store
BENKYO-DO Funding Application

Criteria:
☑ Community Impact
☑ Economic Impact
☑ Cultural Contribution
☐ Alignment with the mission of the Cultural Economy and Economic Development Offices

* As part of this program you will be required to at least 4 meetings a year.

Cultural Economy Office - Business assistance for Japantown to grow as a cultural destination.

Benefit District - Businesses network and share resources.
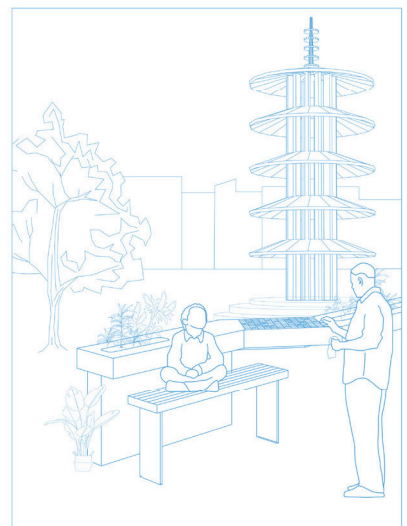
Commons Village
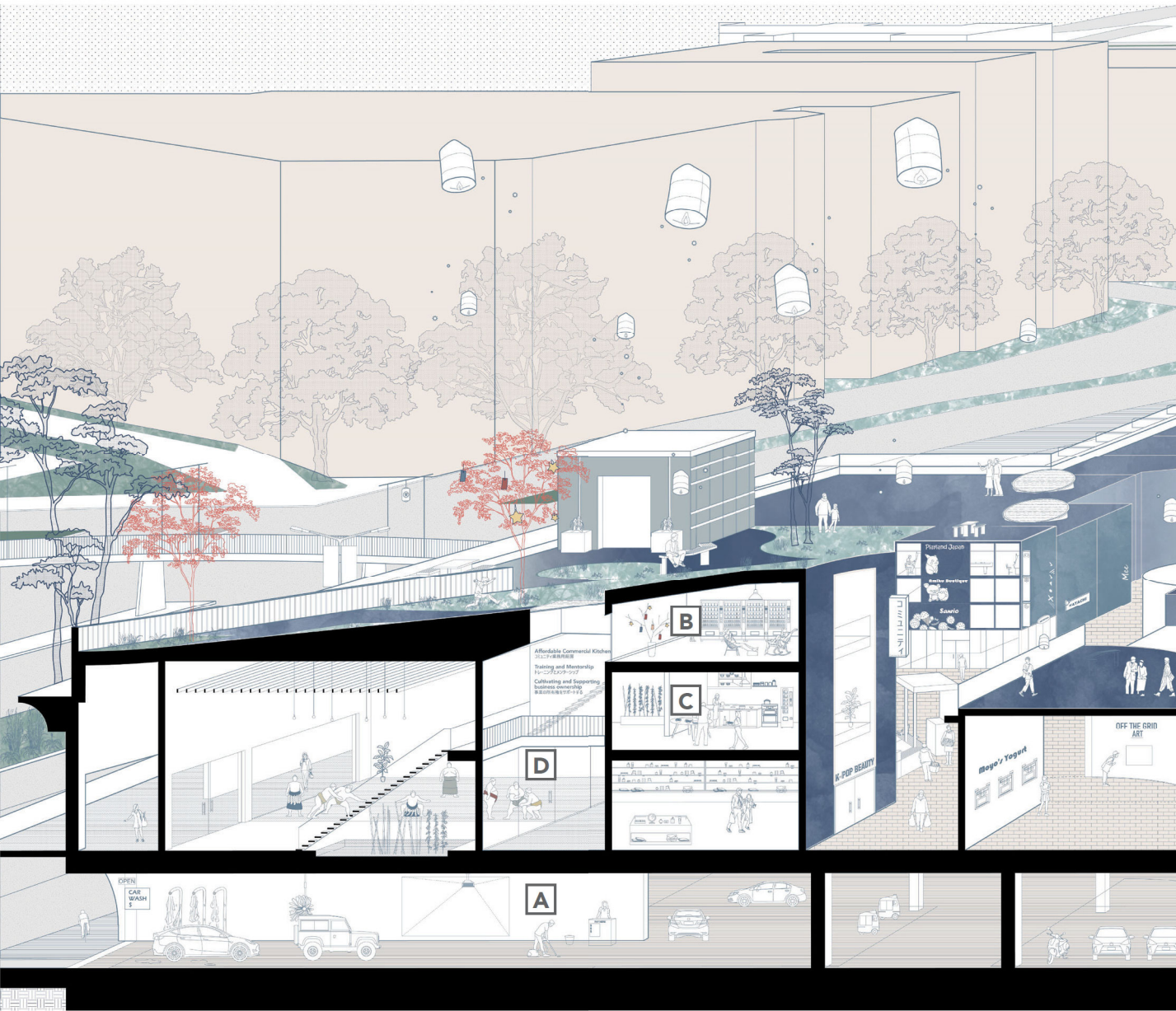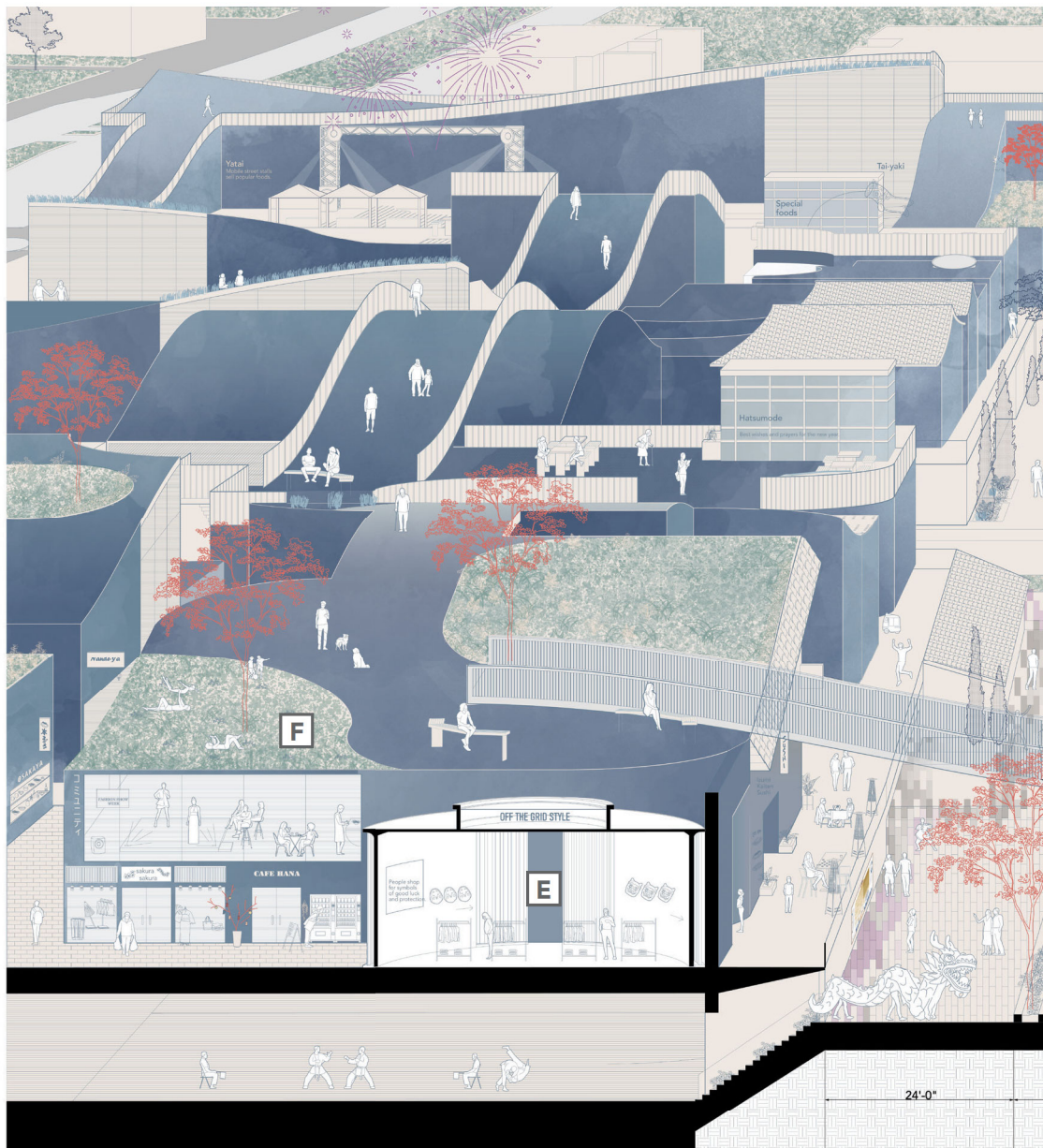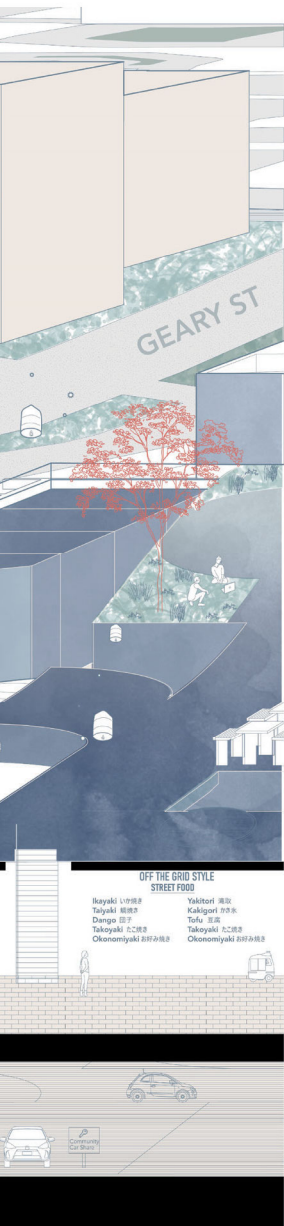
Section Perspective

The section perspective is divided into three scenes. The first scene speaks to the programmatic uses of the three grounds functioning as retail and community space. In the center scene, the curved roofscapes perform as visual connectors to both retail and the pagoda. The last scene shows the potential future housing, and proposes housing adjacent to the New People building, with the intention of residents being cultural contributors to Japantown.

POST ST

I

G

H

MAKERS
STUDIO

10'-0"   13'-0"   12'-0"

Legend

■ Japan Center

▢ Existing Buildings

☐ Proposed Common Grounds

Ground Floor Proposals

A Parking Garage No.1 + Car Wash

B Community Space

C Recreation Space

D Kitchen Incubator + Coworking Space

E Pop Up Shop

F Roofscape Open Space

G Proposed Housing

H Makers Spaces

I Connecting Bridge

Proposed Cultural Benefit District

The protocol for the Cultural Benefit District allows businesses to apply for assistance through the Cultural Economy Office. In order to apply they must contribute to Japantown as a cultural destination providing niche experiences for visitors. While also attending meetings with other business owners to share their network and resources.

日本町
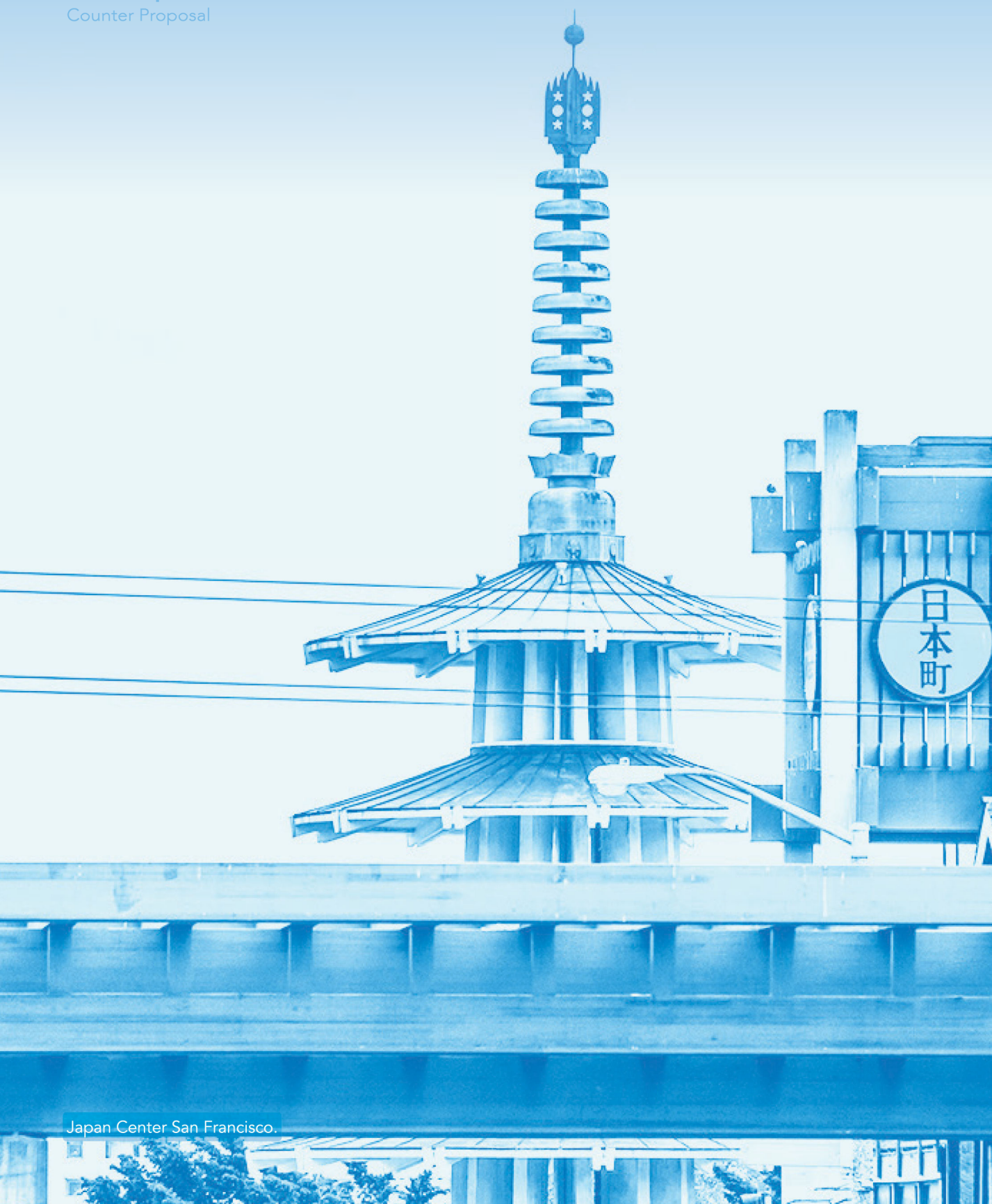
Japan Center San Francisco.

Hidden Japantown

Chak Ying Wong & Mengxian He

San Francisco Japantown suffers from blurred boundaries and lack of accessability. When people come to Japantown for shopping and food they do not notice the multitude of Japanese organizations, as well as historic and cultural buildings with significant meaning to the Japanese American community. These buildings are hidden and lack visibility to people. Japantown SF is not only Japan Center Mall, it occupies 14 blocks. Situated in the Filmore district, Japantown is home to a vibrant multiethnic community of Japanese, Jewish, and Black heritage and is famous for it's Jazz culture. This project proposes to bring legibility and tangibility to the hidden Japantown. The goal is to reintegrate social infrastructure and reallocate the fragmented areas, supporting a diverse social infrastructure that welcomes all different groups of people.

The new scheme is organized according to the principles of a tradtional Japanese Tea Garden. To reduce the neighborhood fragmentation, there are platforms and bridges connecting the north and south side of Geary Blvd, as well as the west and east side of Fillmore Street. Based on the original conditions, more greenery is designed in superblocks south of Geary Blvd, areas of high density of small commercial and residential buildings. A variety of paths improve the accessibility and walkability of the neighborhood for both tourists and residents. They are also aimed to preserve and amplify the cultural heritage of the Japanese and African American communities.
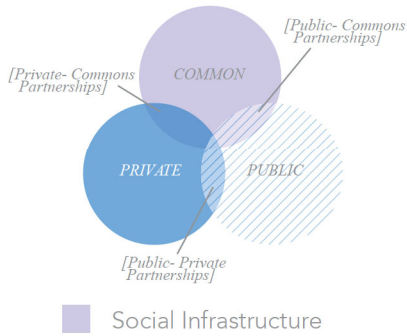
The project's vision is to provide points of engagement for passers by and residents. Elevated pathways and doubling of the ground creates spatial possibilities of juxtaposition, broadening and blending with the existing spaces, seaming together existing assets. Overlapping intersections bring intimate visibility of culture (which includes Japanese American and African African cultures), commerce, multiple generations, locals and visitors in the picture of past and future. New interventions and pathways not only ensure connectivity of different spaces, but also supply spaces for small businesses and local artists to thrive. Therefore, it helps the sustainable development of long-term economic, cultural, and environmental growth.

Hidden Japantown
Three Grounds Analysis
Site: Japantown SF

COMMON

[Public- Commons Partnerships]

[Private- Commons Partnerships]

PRIVATE

PUBLIC

[Public- Private Partnerships]

■ Social Infrastructure

■ Most Private (4)

■ Private (3)

■ Private (2)

■ Least Private (1)

■ Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

● Bus Stops
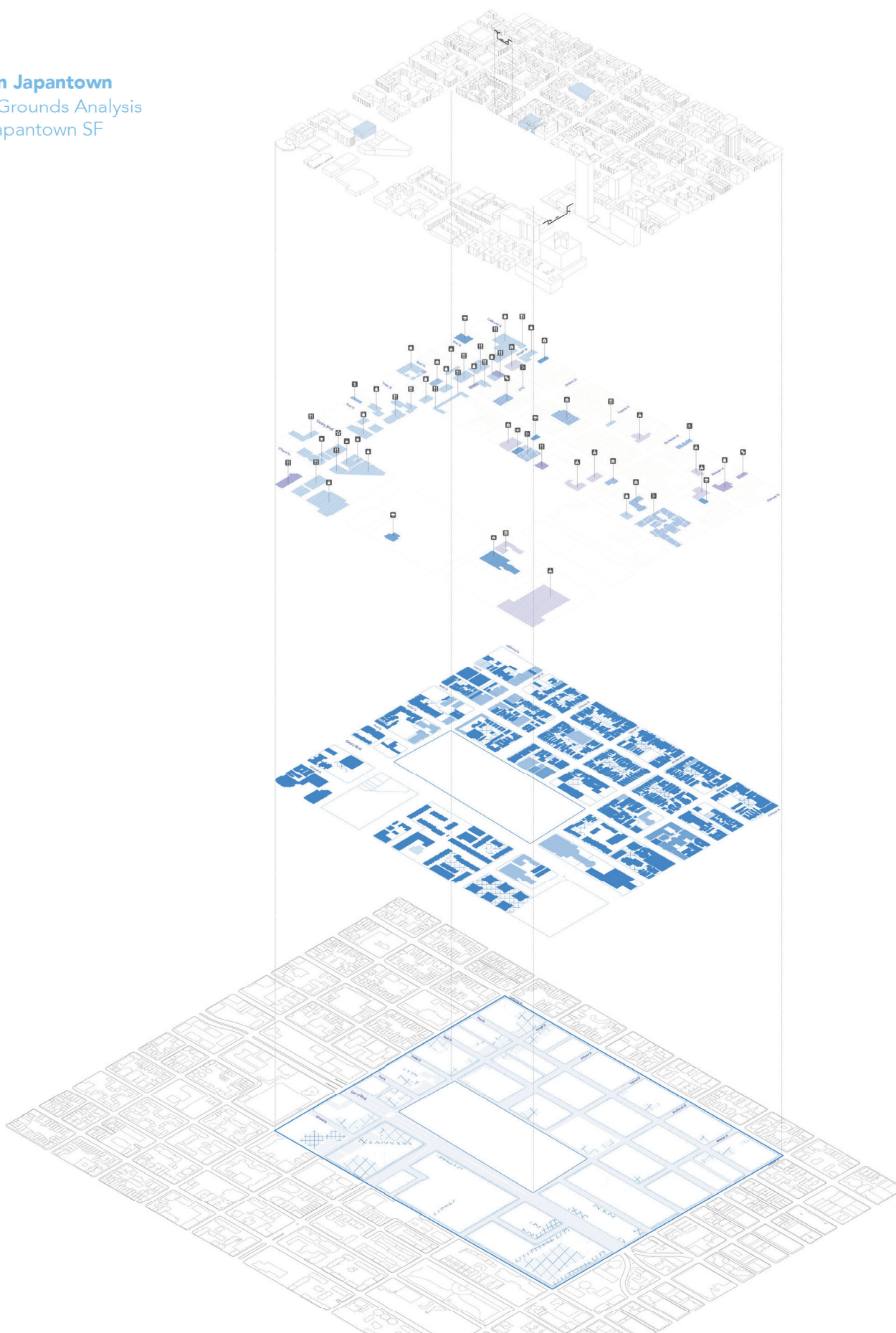
1 Soko Hardware

2 Japanese Bilingual and Multicultural Childcare

3 Japanese YWCA Building

4 Japanese Cultural and Community Center

5 Japantown's Peace Plaza

6 Benkyodo Company

Urban Analysis, Japantown SF

Japantown is the center of Japanese culture in San Francisco. It was host to an atrocious displacement of Japanese residents during World War II. Japantown, known in Japanese as Nihonmachi. The first wave of Japanese immigrants arrived in San Francisco in the 1860s and settled mainly in the Chinatown and the South of Market neighborhoods until the 1906 earthquake and fire drove families to present-day Japantown.

Hidden Japantown
Collage and Ideo-logic Diagrams

Fillmore Street Vision Collage

COMMON

Hidden Japantown	Social Infrastructure	Culture Based Retailing Stores
		Religious Institutions
		NGOs
		Commercials
		Entertainment
		Library & Education
		Community Service
		Government Institutions

PRIVATE

Hidden Japantown	Locals	Local Retailing
		Public & Private Housing
		Private Greens
		Neighborhood Serving Commercials
		Food & Cafe
		Education

PUBLIC

Hidden Japantown	Public Accessibility	Roads & Sidewalks
		Open Spaces & Public Parks
		Historical Landmarks
		Public Transportation
		Religious Institutions
		NGOs
		Library

Ideo-logic Diagrams

Cultural

1a Nihonmachi Little Friends

1d Tea House
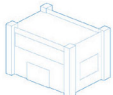
1b Raphael Weill Child Development Center

1e Outdoor Exibitions

1c Public Art

1f Temporary Market

Recreational

2a Community Public Housing

2d Pavilion

2b Market Installs

2e Basketball Court

2c Outside Dining Space

2f Gardens

Environmental

3a Parks
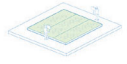
3b Urban Farming

3c Artificial Stream

Japantown SF Interventions

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |

Japantown SF Event Calendar

Study Model 1, Plug- ins

Study Model 2, Modules

Study Models and Concept Development

Platform and bridges cross both south and north of Geary Blvd, providing an intimate connection to two sides, reintegrating and reallocating the fragmented areas.

Hidden Japantown
Proposed Masterplan

ZONE 4

| Outdoor Cafe | Dining
| Walkway Plaza
| Micro Events
| Hybird Bussiness Mode
| Stalls

Pine St

ZONE 1

Public Installation |
Pop-up |
Mini Amphi-theatre |
Terracing Seat Wall / Planter |
Japanese Restaurant |
Jazz Bar |
Snack Block |
Retails |

Bush St

ZONE 2

Tea House |
Dry Garden |
Bamboo Garden |
Reastaurants |
Central Plaza |
Urban Farming |
Jazz Bars |

Sutter St

Post St

Geary Blvd

ZONE 3

Jazz Bars |
Theatre |
Sky Garden |
Tea House |
Artificial River |
Pop-up Stores |

O'Farrell St

Fillmore St

Webster St

Fillmore St

Webster St

HIDDEN JAPANTOWN

JAPANTOWN

Green Space

Commercial Area

Japanese Commercial Cluster

Japanese Culture Cluster

Japanese School

Japanese Church

Japanese Community

Japanese Retail

Japantown Locals

Commercial

Cultural

Japanese American

American

African American

To expand the possibility of these two catogaries, new interventions are nessesory to be applied to local businesses, Japanese cultural cluster and natural environments.
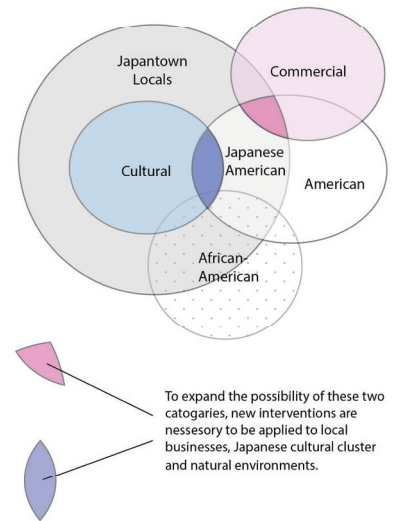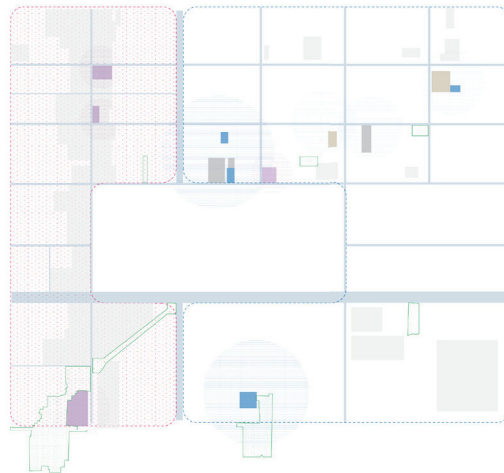
Urban Strategy Plan

Elevated Platforms   Original Buildings
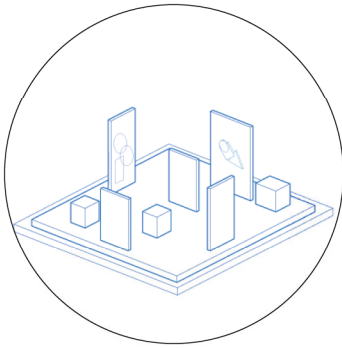
1   Outdoor Exhibition

Demonstrate historical cultural resources to active the historical block's vitality.
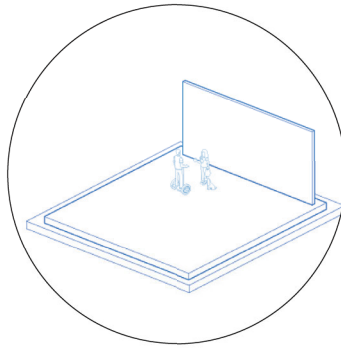
2   Performing Stage

Stages allows street arists and different communities to hold events and give performances.
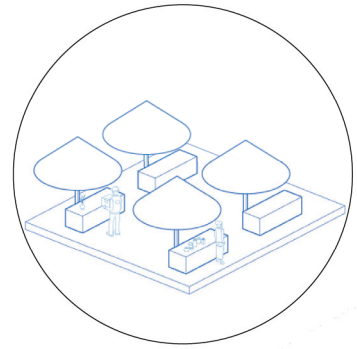
3   Pop-up

Provides space for community memebers to participate in informal retail and farmers market (e.g. take-out/curiosity stands).

Urban Strategy Axonometric

This drawing demonstrates platforms and bridges connecting the north and south side of Geary Blvd, as well as the west and east side of Fillmore Street. Different paths imporves accessibility and walkability of the neighborhood for both tourists and locals in 14 blocks.

Sutter St

Post St

Geary Blvd

3

5

Fillmore

4

Fillmore

Pine St

Bush St

1

2

6
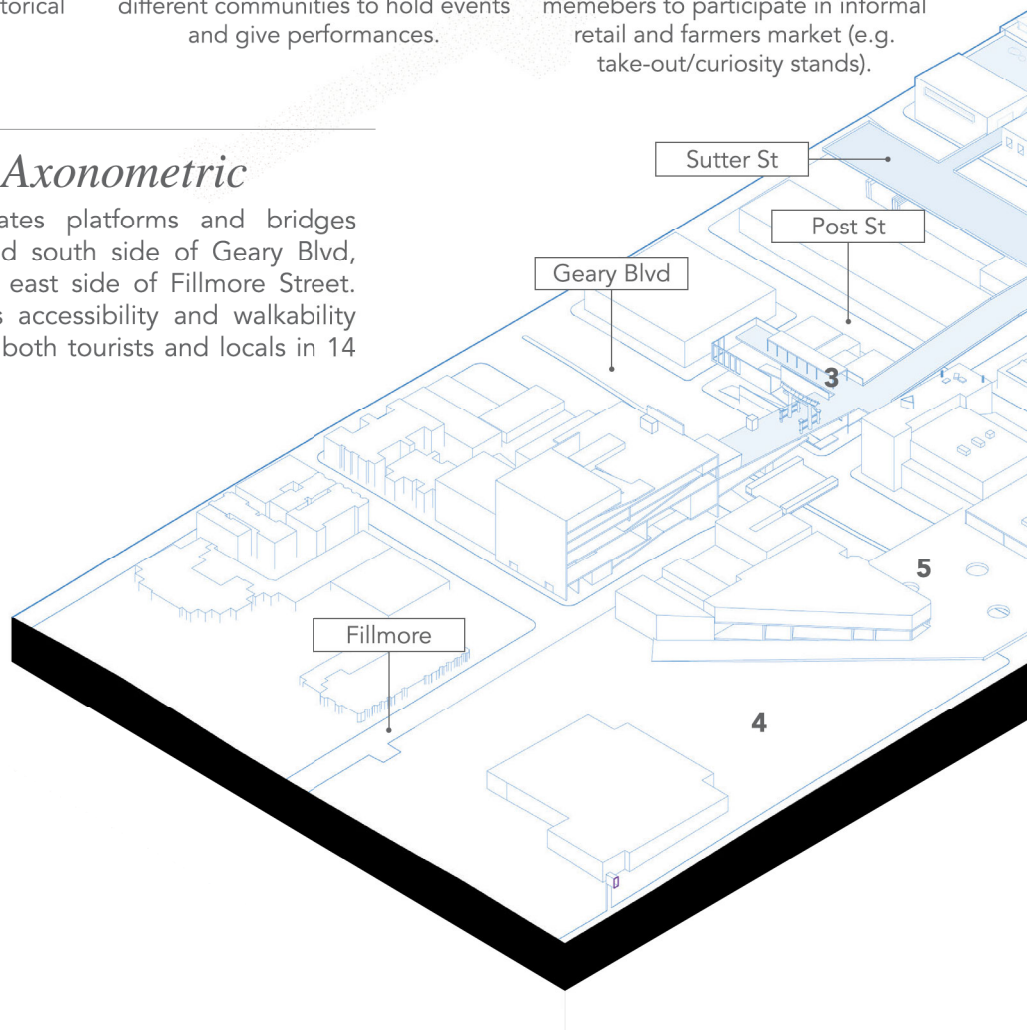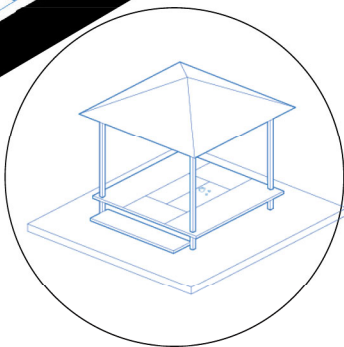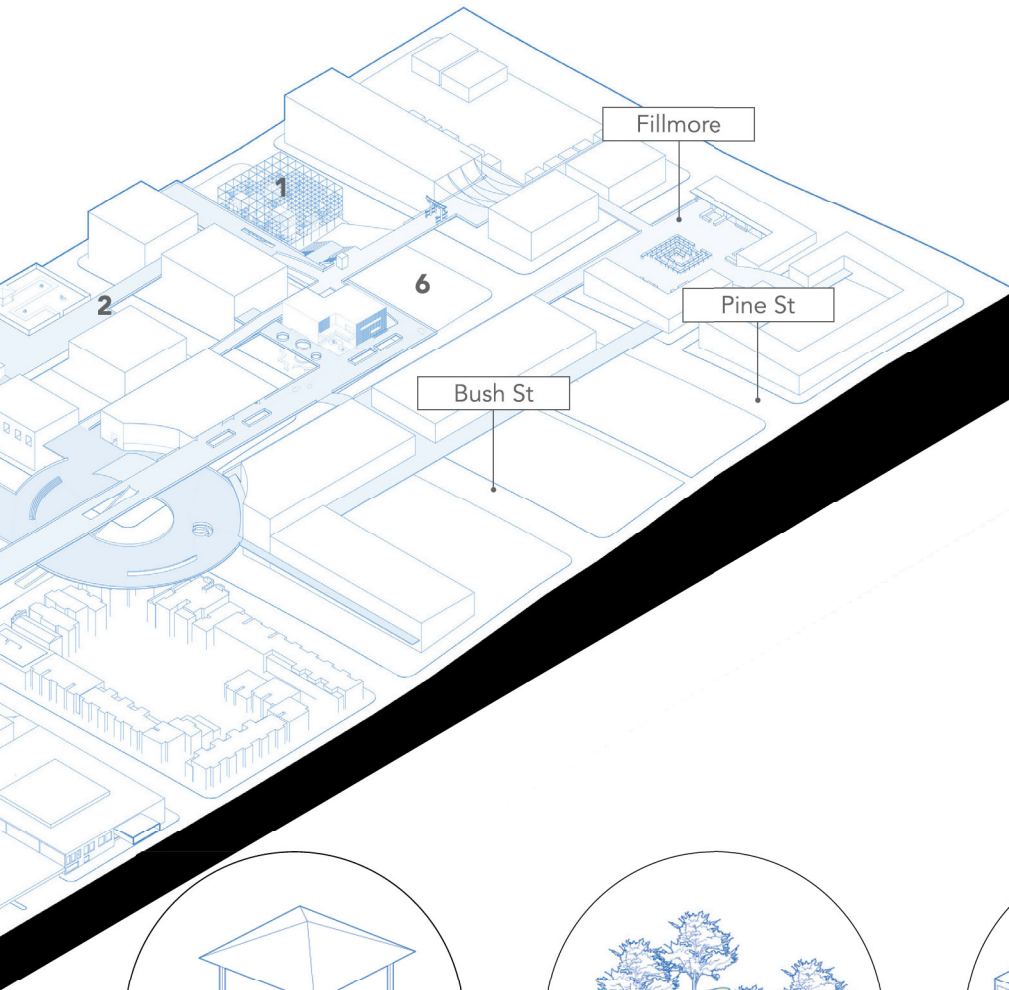
4 Tea House

Provides space for locals and visitors to have a rest, drink teas and have snacks.
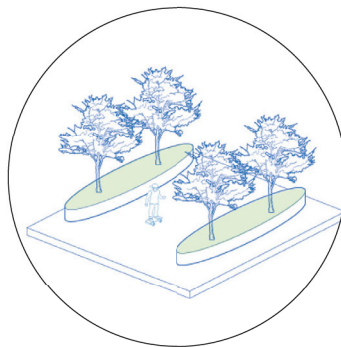
5 Parks

Provides more greenary for balancing natural and urban environment.
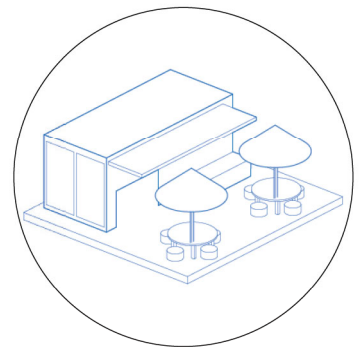
6 Outdoor Dining Space

Provides oudside dining spaces with better views and good social distance.

120

Immersive Street View

New interventions are applied to both north and south of the Geary Blvd. Providing an intimate connection to two sides, reintegrating and reallocating the fragmented areas. Juxtaposition of cultural and commercial areas is the key idea that supports intersections culturally. By enriching urban form and land uses, the implementation of pop-ups and greenery transforms the fourteen blocks into a diverse social network. Place of rest supports the intersections of generations and pleasure in nature.
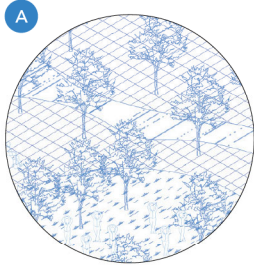
Artificial Stream
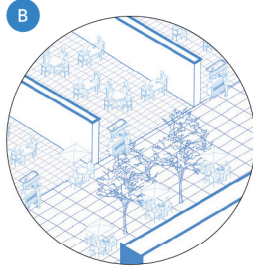
Outdoor Dinning Space
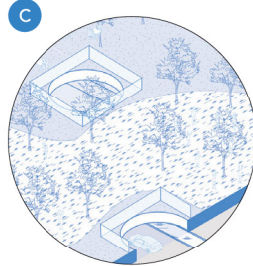
Sky Garden
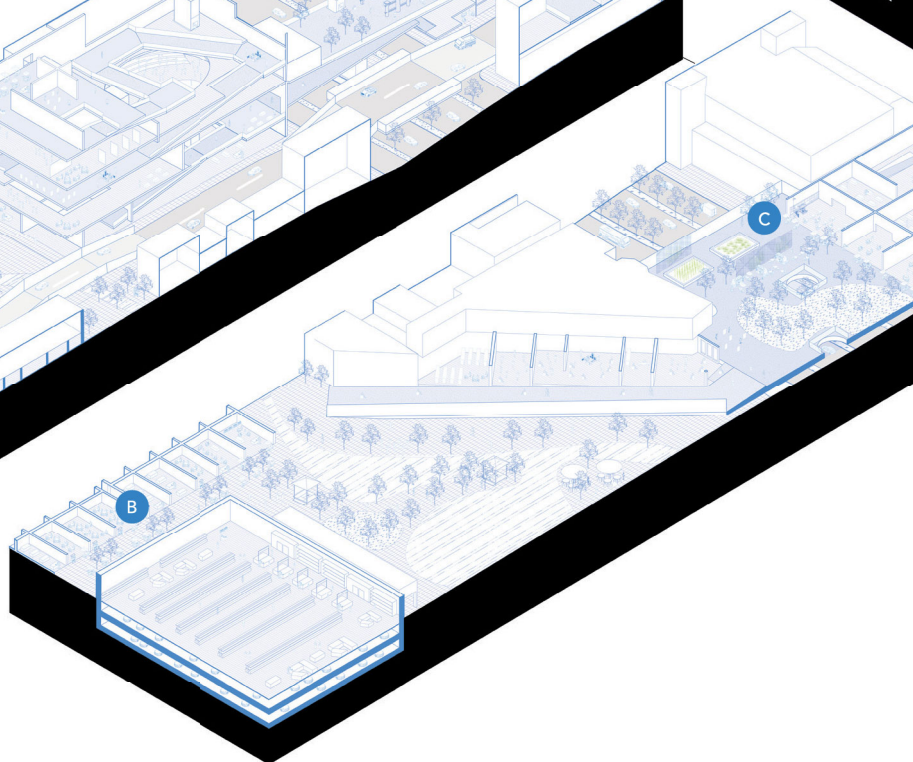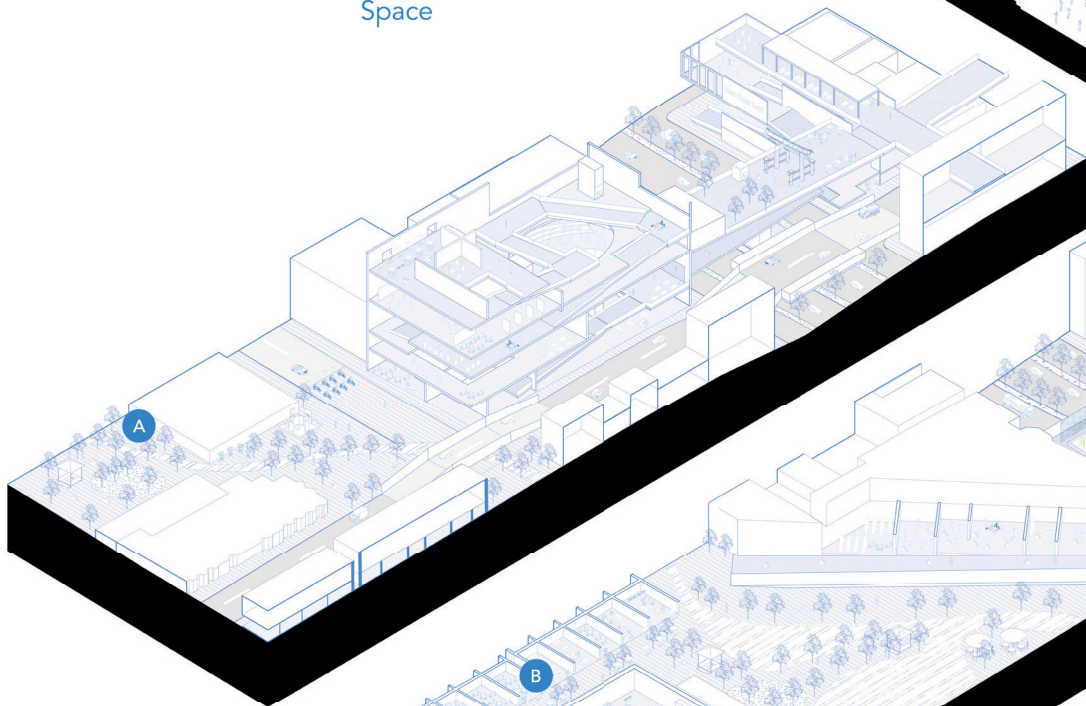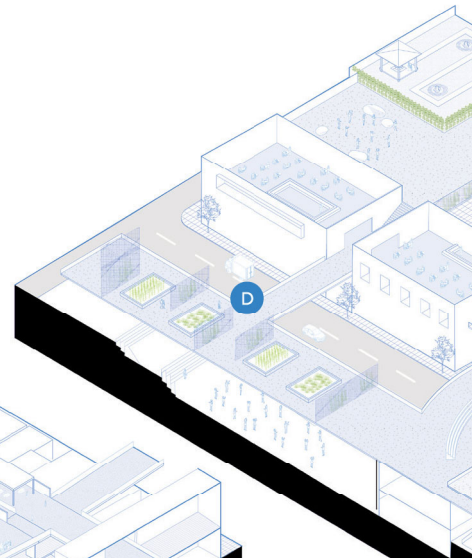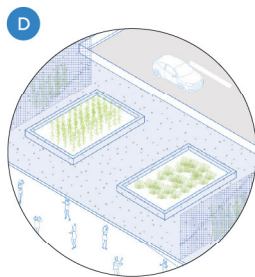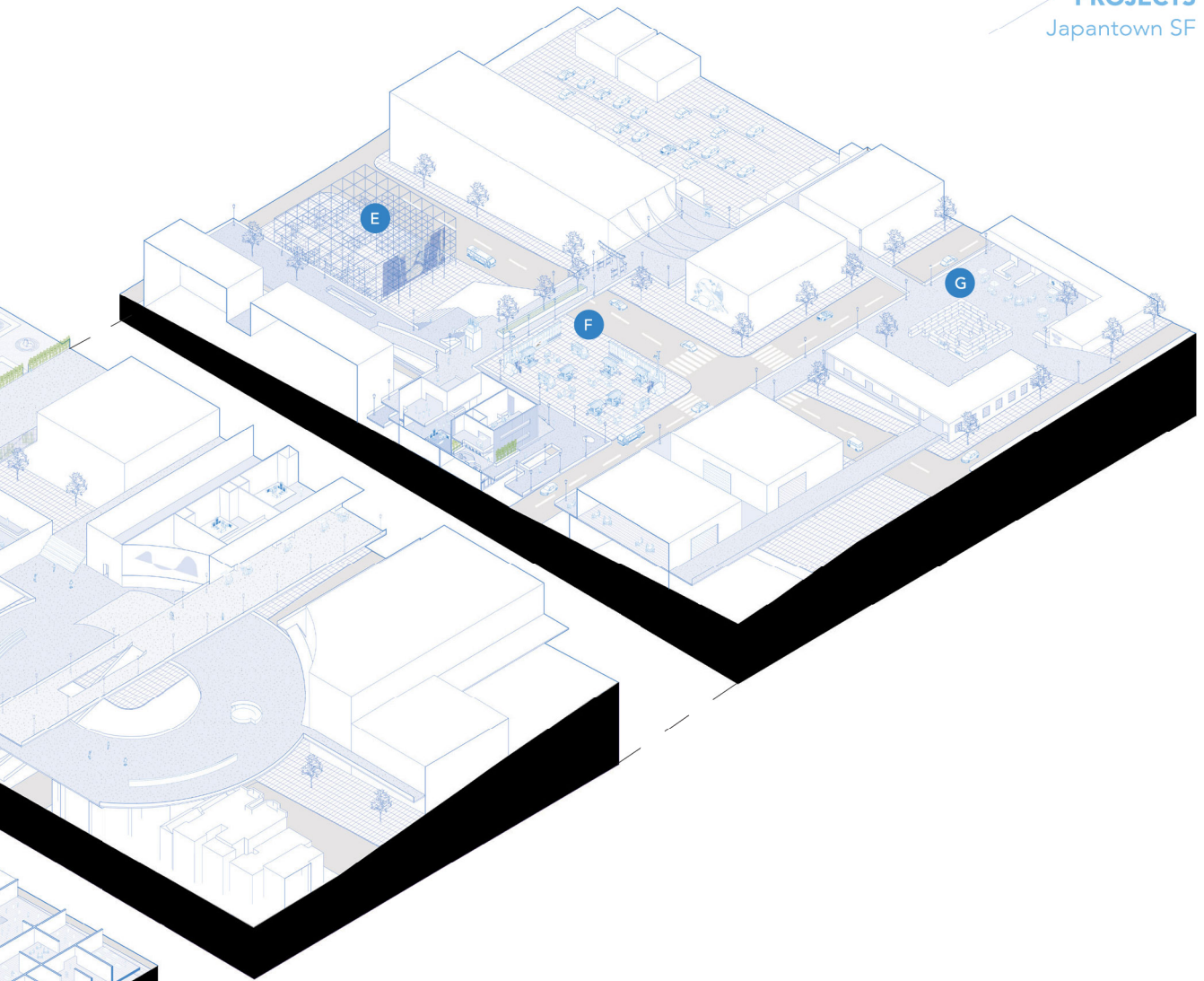
Urban Farming
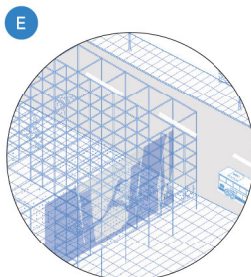
Micro Event
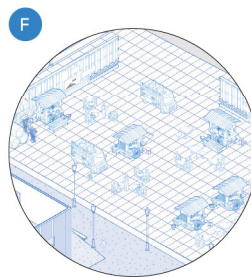
Temporary Market
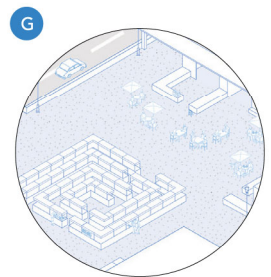
Public Installation

Street Realm - Pedestrian priority with access to Bikes, Delivery Vans, and Cars moving at pedestrian speed.

Social Infrastructure - Privetly owned Public Space
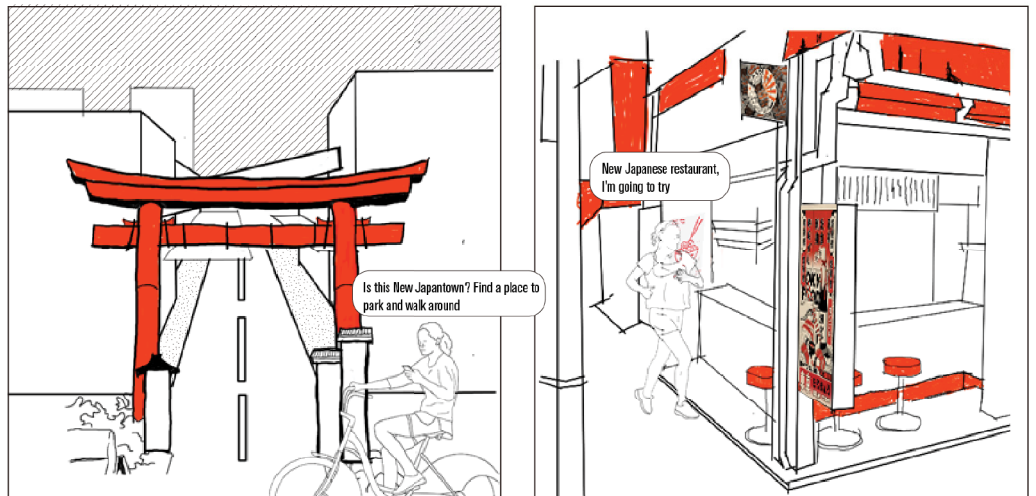
Gate - Provides clear navigation for visitors and locals to recognize and visit Hidden Japantown.
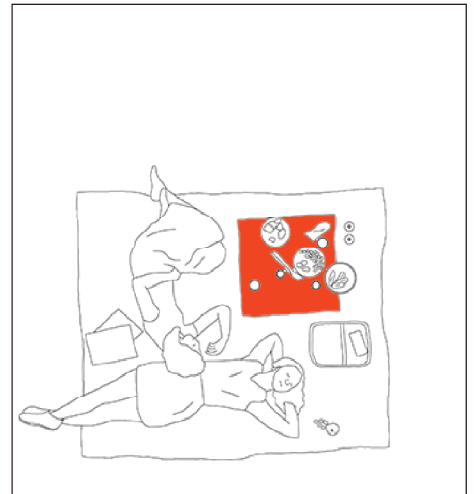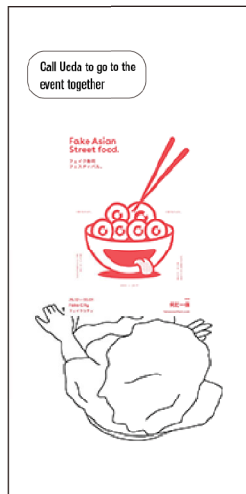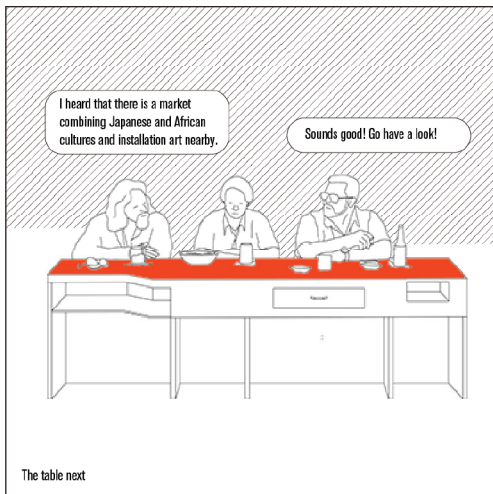
Peace in a Hustle - People enjoy the leisure time in a commercial and cultural cluster.

Section Perspective (Bush St)

A view of the elevated platforms connecting north and south sides of the Bush St. They bring activity inside and outside the buildings, and above and under the bridges. It creates the spatial possibility of juxtaposition, broadening and blending with the existing spaces.
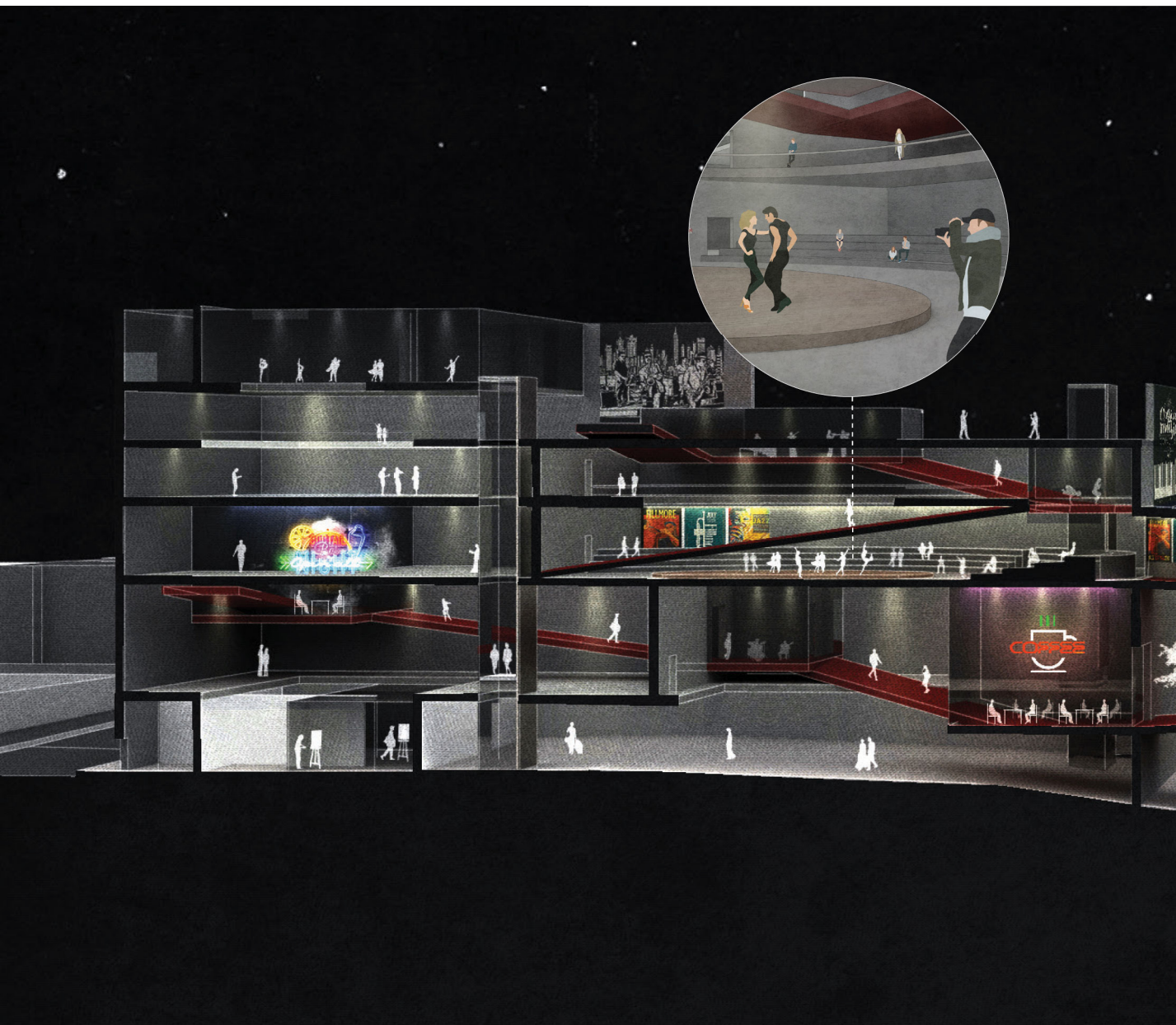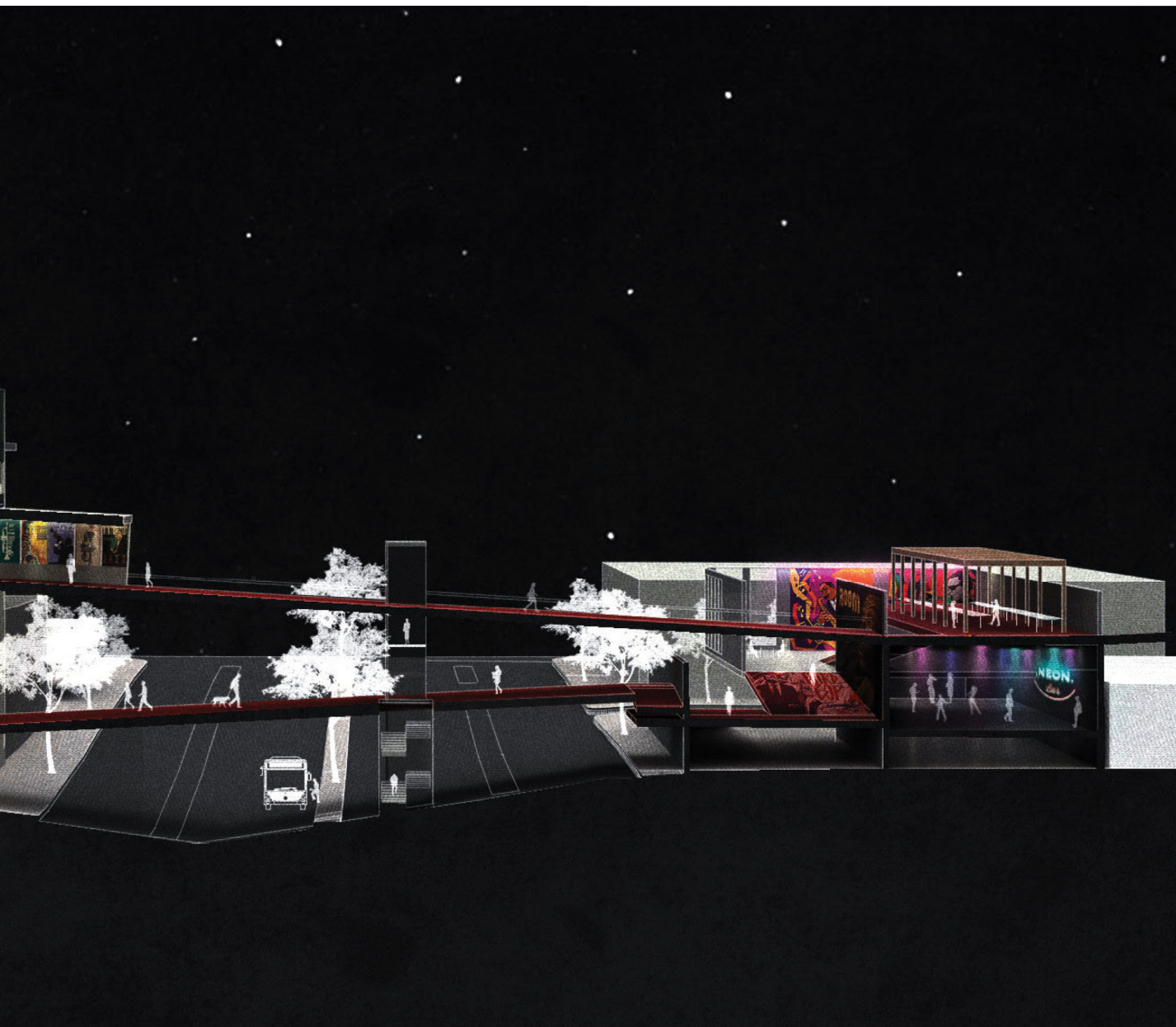
Section Perspective (Geary Blvd)

A view of elevated platforms which provides different paths for connecting north and south sides of Geary Blvd. Continuous pathways go through both inside and outside spaces which creates more spatial possibilities for artists and visitors to perform and enjoy entertainments, as well as preserve and amplify the cultural heritage of the Japanese and African American communities.

We have to address the past harms that were inflicted, and to come from a space of humility to really recognize reconciliation, to recognize restorative practices, and how can that be part of the geist of the neighborhood.

- George Turner

Excelsior

Dreaming the Restorative Future For All

Maribel Ramirez
Executive Director of Excelsior Action Group
George Turner
Executive Director of Phatt Chance
In conversation with Julia Grinkrug

The Excelsior is a "quintessential San Francisco Neighborhood"[1]. Being one of the oldest, it is nevertheless a highly diverse and constantly changing neighborhood, serving as a welcoming home for working-class and immigrant communities with a tapestry of Latinx, Black, Filipino and Chinese cultures. Its unique character is enabled by the vibrant mixture of commercial and residential uses along Outer Mission street, one of the longest commercial corridors in San Francisco. However, with the rise of e-commerce and gentrification it has been increasingly struggling to support its base of local small businesses. Excelsior Action Group (EAG), a resident-led community-based organization, has been adamant in preserving the "neighborhood's rich cultural heritage and economic vitality"[2]. Through the creative partnership with Common Ground studio, EAG seeked to conceptualize a shared vision for an equitable, inclusive and restorative future.

[1] From the website of Excelsior Action Network. http://www.eagsf.org/the-excelsior.html
[2] ibid
[3] From the homepage of La Cocina. https://lacocinasf.org/mission
[4] From the website. https://phattchance.org/

The following interview features reflections from two key community partners in Excelsior - Maribel A. Ramirez, the executive director of EAG and a former director of La Cocina[3], a nonprofit kitchen incubator supporting women-of-color and immigrant food entrepreneurs, which she developed from the ground up; and George Turner, CEO and co-founder of Phatt Chance, a nonprofit organization that helps formerly incarcerated people to reintegrate to society[4].

PART 1 : PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS / MEETING IN THE RAIN

JG: Looking back at where we started, how would you describe your expectations from and conditions for this partnership?

MR: As a new executive director, as someone who has not worked in economic development and policy-making, I didn't have a lot of expectations. This arena of work is very new to me, but I know I have gut feelings. As a person who comes from a challenged background, from the inner city, I know what real-world support looks like, and although I came in with no expectations, I [was] hopeful that this partnership could bring a new set of eyes, a new way of imagining what the neighborhood [could be,] and how the design [of] the "social infrastructure", of where we gather could really build and foster community, [and] how that can build social capital, how that can in turn build economic capital.

Mairbel A. Ramirez

I was also interested in getting that language: learning how to communicate the community's needs. Especially when I think about moving this work forward, knowing that I will need the funding to do that, while not being solely dependent on that. Therefore, I was excited to be meeting with people who are professionals and who have dedicated their lives to this, and maybe have the intellectual knowledge of how to move this forward, but feeling that my experience on the ground, was on the same level. We were really looking to think about this studio in a way, where you honor voices who might not feel so comfortable and familiar with this arena, but really have something to bring because they live in that space, also they see every day what community-building through design spaces can become.

GT: Well, I agree. I didn't have any expectations at the time that we met or began. I became involved strictly on my faith and confidence in Maribel. She was really excited about her experiences, and so much so, that she invited me to meet the students. I didn't have any

expectations, because I really didn't know anyone on a close basis in that profession that could share in depth what folks do that learn that particular craft. But the one thing that linked us, was the day we stood in the rain together and introduced ourselves to each other on that corner.

And neither the weather nor anything else didn't stop us from connecting; whether language, background, [or] experience. None of that prevented us from connecting; actually, what it did, it brought us all together. At that moment, when I shared a little bit about [myself], and everybody else had an opportunity to get a general idea of what our projects were, and I was able to find out from you and the other professor, and some of those students, why they were there, it pulled me [in].

In front of the empty Mission De Flores. Walking Tour in Excelsior. 2021

At that particular moment it pulled me in because now, I found out that there are people of different shapes and forms that also are giving their entire whole to [make] change in the community. So it was a good opportunity for exposure for me, and once I experienced that, and began to talk to folks, it was like you mentioned; I began to view things through a totally different lens.

Because that one day on the corner, all I was just a local guy trying to learn how to do more, and I was given an opportunity to be thrown into an international arena.

I became even more interested in not necessarily just what I was bringing, but what I could learn, and I began to learn the language, and the way that the students have been educated and taught to look at things that were graduating from your school, and it became really super exciting. Because that one day on the corner, all I was just a local guy trying to learn how to do more, and I was given an opportunity to be thrown into an international arena.

Because, as we walked through the quarter with Maribel's lead, and the back of my legs became wet from the rain, I looked around at the rest of us and everybody was like comrades, and committed to this walk, and we didn't let anything stop us. I'm serious, I treasure that memory, because that memory is something that I envisioned

when you asked me about your students, [and] that's the first thing I thought about; how we kept going.

PART 2 : RACE / LANGUAGE / INSTITUTIONS / EDUCATION

JG: What do you think about the role of academia in retelling and amplifying personal narratives and oral histories of the community members? What do you think is its biggest potential, and what is the biggest risk?

MR: I think when you are imagining, when you're in the realm of ideas, it's hard to translate it to the community in need, even if they are the ones who could benefit from that. And then also there is an issue of sometimes a tokenization of the people you're "trying to help." For example, when I used to work at La Cocina we never used the word "empowerment," because the people we worked for were already powerful; we were just giving and providing bridges to access the power that was already within. So I think it's important to be thinking about the challenge of tokenization of language. I think both George and I brought that up several times.

Having a space for a shared communication [is important]. If you [as an academic] get a little lost in theory, it could inadvertently ostracize the C\community you're trying to work with. For example, and I can only speak for myself, I was raised in a certain way, and was really influenced by my mother-in-law who was raised in Texas, and has a huge fear of police officers. She would travel [and in Texas football's a really big thing], but she would have to think about having enough gas, because you didn't want to get pulled over and stop anywhere to get gas that was not welcoming to Mexican Americans.

So there's already this deference [to authority], or this fear of what we perceive as "authorities" or "experts", while these oral histories, or songs and stories, and folklore, as a way of communicating are really important parts of a community's histories and needs [in our community], they are as honorable as a book that's been published by Chronicle Books or something.

It talks a little bit about the schisms, that we need to figure out what that bridge is, to have more of an equal collaboration, honoring those historical traumas and voices that have not always been valued the way they should be.

[When we look at things this way,] it talks a little bit about the schisms, that we need to figure out what that bridge is, to have more of an equal collaboration, honoring those historical traumas and voices that have not always been valued the way they should be.

GT: When we talk about working with folks in the community, there's a stale taste in [their] mouth for some folks. Because even, to bring you up to date, people that have had social services, the things they've had to go through just to get a little help because there was a single mother, you had to turn against your own family, to get a little assistance for bread and food and housing and minimal healthcare.

So there's been a lot of division there, and it resulted in a lot of distrust over the years, but the good side I found that, through higher education, at least you have a platform to vent. You [academics,] have an arena to connect with us, and for us [it is a chance] to find resources.

You know, I'm not just dreaming this, I'm not just imagining this. This comes from the conversations we had at Sunday dinner with fried chicken that is southern cuisine, as they call it. We talked around the table after church on Sunday, but it didn't go any further, because the parents and the grandparents didn't want to see you get physically hurt, because they saw people dragged by horses and pulled apart, and hung and whipped for things that they didn't do. But what I found [was my communal history and culture], because I sat at those tables; I was a little guy at those tables, listening, eating corn on the cob and listening to my uncles brag about how hard they worked. [They described] what was important to them: how long their days were, and what made them a man was taking care of their families, and how hard they worked, and how they decided to stay with their family and not leave them, despite how tough it was.

See, but then, what I see as the avenue that brought me a certain amount of peace, and provided [for] me, was choosing higher education. Because if you give up and fall into the arena of feeling, as if there's nowhere to go, [thinking] "I can't trust anybody; they're

Community Driven Public Art in Excelsior. 2021

Image: Max Marttila installation @ Central DRUG Store, 4494 Mission St. Photograph by Urban Works Agency.

134

not going to let me accomplish anything in life anyway, I'm doomed to an early death from drugs, alcohol, violence prison," then yes, you are. But if you're exposed to something else, I believe you'll do something else. People that continue their education can learn to fend for yourself, and offer a viable service to the community on their own that doesn't necessarily require them to depend on the system to work for food. You can provide a service where you're bringing something to the table that the community needs, and the system hasn't been able to provide, because the system can provide only so much.

I believe that, instead of teaching people to become system dependent, let's try becoming system independent! This way you could take some pride in yourself from a garden if you're selling vegetables, if you're repairing shoes, whatever craft that you have, you can learn to self-sustain and conduct yourself with pride. Education, higher education will give you the tools to start thinking this way. Do you know how many people can't even dream? They have been exposed to so much trauma they can't dream. They say, "Dream it, believe it, and you can achieve it." Well, what about the people who can't dream?

George Turner

Do you know how many people can't even dream? They have been exposed to so much trauma they can't dream. They say, "Dream it, believe it, and you can achieve it." Well, what about the people who can't dream?

Education provides this opportunity for you to meet other people, to find out that your experience is not the only experience; that [there are] many experiences throughout the world that people go through and learn how to deal with. The more we become educated, the more we stop drawing borders between each other, the more we talk to each other, communicate to find out that we have more in common than we have not in common, and once we find that out and really discover that we're not each other's enemy, then we have a much better opportunity to provide a community's environment [that is] safer, more respectful, and we can experience the love of another human being and provide that.

PART 3 : TOKENISM / CULTURE / REBUILDING ALLYSHIPS

JG: What would you ask from academic institutions who are willing to partner with communities to protect yourself from tokenism and

from appropriation? What is the value that you want to receive from this partnership?

GT: When I first started working, the one thing that I'll never forget [was] the first meeting with an organization providing services for people returning into the community [after incarceration]; homeless people, people with mental health [problems]. The guy that was in charge, the director of all these programs, was there for this big meeting and everybody was [saying], "This guy's coming tonight, he's gonna make a presentation, and is going to let us know exactly what he wants us to do in the community." For the first time in my life, I saw this guy come in with the dress of a Latino male; unapologetically Latino.

It was definitely related to the culture; he had the deep mustache that the average person would be intimidated by, and he walked up, and I'm looking at him as he's entering to go walking toward the stage, and I'm wondering, "Who is that guy? Who does he work for?" Because this is what I'm conditioned to believe: he doesn't look like what the boss is supposed to look like. And he walked up to the stage and spoke with a thick accent but perfect English and introduced himself and began to share what he was there for.

> *The education system is not necessarily set up and designed to graduate people of color, to continue to be people of color; they are set up to graduate people that largely emulate white males because at the time they were the majority of people in power.*

Now years later I worked in one of his offices, and I told him what I experienced that night, and what I felt. What he told me was: "the main thing for you to do is to focus on your education, but you do not have to give up who you are in order to move up the ladder and to provide services. You don't have to give up your culture in order for you to succeed either." I never forgot that because oftentimes people, when they enter higher education, the education system is not necessarily set up and designed to graduate people of color, to continue to be people of color; they are set up to graduate people that largely emulate white males because at the time they were the majority of people in power.

So what I would suggest to anybody who is looking forward to higher education, is to be aware that it is going to be a constant struggle; because you're going to hear you're not like the rest of them you're going to hear you're a little different and you're going to hear "you do very well for a person of color." But still, I believe it's very important that you stay focused on your roots, the successes

in your culture, not everything about your history is something that's negative.

MR: I think that what you and Chris provided was the foundation of how to involve the community; you came to our place. If we would have gone to CCA, or if we would have just done our initial meeting in this hypercharged intellectual exploration of community, it wouldn't have [worked].

For me as a community partner [it was really important to speak from my location]. As an educated [person], like George, we were the first people in our family to have graduated from college. But still, there is this [hesitance]: "I don't want to feel like an imposter", like I'm often feeling. I value my work and I value my ethics, but I wouldn't have felt as comfortable to really express what the needs are and have confidence in what that is if it wasn't here on our turf.

This nonprofit world is very new to me, and there have been a couple of groups I have joined, where [I realized], "I'm the token person of color here."I don't think there's any malice in it, but you know it's like a check and it's just, "Here we have this woman: first-generation American, a first person to graduate from college. Okay, we're good." So I am very grateful for what Chris and you have done, and I think how you set it up was different. [I didn't feel like I was being tokenized.]

One thing that really connects George and I is that we've had the same lived experiences, and that we both used our lived experiences to define our work.

When George was talking about what he wants, and what his needs were, and what his experience was like in front of the Center, I realized that the one thing that really connects George and I is that we've had the same lived experiences, and that we both used our lived experiences to define our work.

When I was at La Cocina, many of the people I worked with were amazingly intelligent; Harvard graduates, Stanford graduates, that were really community-focused people. But they didn't know what it was like to grow up poor, which I don't wish on anybody, but there is a different way [of speaking]. So when I spoke to our businesses, I had a similar connection that I could understand; their deference to these positions of authority.

Whereas, somebody who hasn't lived that experience just doesn't think about those things [and it's difficult to them] to honor that perspective. So I think the way you set it up, for George and I [exceeded our expectations]. All this was totally new to us, so

we were just so excited. We wanted to do this and I was going to be happy with anything really, I think, because this was just an exploration; [however], it was much deeper than that and it moved much more than even my wildest dreams.

PART 4 : CBO MISSION + OUTCOMES

Mission Street. Walking Tour in Excelsior Neighborhood. 2021

JG: In what ways do you feel this partnership supported the cause of your organizations? If you would have an opportunity for another round of this partnership, what would you request for?

MR: The mission of EAG is to support our commercial corridors, and I think what is unique here in this neighborhood is that we have low-cost commercial rents, or relatively low-cost commercial for the city itself, but we are also in the process of expansion. [In our] neighborhood the property values are rising very quickly, we have a lot of density coming in. It wasn't the mission of my organization until I started working here, but this idea of how to fight gentrifying forces, without being completely negative [became prominent in the recent years]- how do we foster the community that we have here? It's been a working-class neighborhood for a long time, so the businesses and the business owners reflect that. [So, the question is:] and how do we build resiliency within that community and ensure the diversity of business opportunities and property ownership that is still diverse economically and culturally?

I think that what this project, or the studio, helped the most with, was to feel that I was not alone. When Chris had reached out to me, and I just happened to do this site visit, where I was going to do a shared retail space / incubator program, [I felt that he shared] the ideas that I had organically, but maybe not the language behind it. Then, it was a little out there [and no one took it seriously]. But this studio really helped to show that I was not the only person thinking about these things in this way. It helped me with the language, and perhaps also the ideas, of what I wanted to do to move this work forward. It was only through this partnership [between our community organization and the academy] that it became obvious that these ideas of restorative practice, of restorative justice, of restorative economics - all these things are really couched in our place-making, in our social infrastructure, which builds off of these

commercial quarters, where people meet with people, shop, and where people gain their own economic agency.

How do we keep the personality and the grittiness of our neighborhood, but [also] that's reflected more in justice practice, or justice-style practices?

So that's what this studio brought, and that's how it's really helped continue to move the mission of the work I'm doing. It also really helped legitimize this idea within my board. [Previously,] my board was mainly thinking about economic development through corporate [stores like] Walgreens and Starbucks. However, the studio conversations really gave the legitimization to move us away from that mindset. How do we keep the personality and the grittiness of our neighborhood, but [also] that's reflected more in justice practice, or justice-style practices?

For the next studio, I would like to continue to build off of the work that we started, maybe focus on a couple of signature projects to see how we provide a safety net for our residents, for our low-income business owners, that creates like a space of a place of support by having signature projects throughout the district.

GT: I don't have a lot to add to this section because Maribel summed it up so eloquently. However, I'll just reiterate that I came in as a guest, and walked away feeling as if I've established relationships, and that I'm a partner, and that I'm a supporter of the education that has been provided through your organization. Definitely, I'll walk away feeling connected.

Excelsior (Persia Triangle), Ever Upward Sculpture.

Trans-Mission Activation

Jason Gonzalez & Savannah Lindsey

The Excelsior/Outer Mission neighborhood of San Francisco is lovingly referred to as "the Gateway to San Francisco" by those who reside there. However, due to its location on the outer edge of the city, and lack of a defining profitable quality, it is often overlooked and left to fend for itself by city officials and in the designation of city funds. From past to present, Excelsior has been filled with a community ready to engage and improve its environment and it is the hope of this project to reinforce the existing community.

The central spine of the neighborhood is the Mission Street Commercial corridor, which is plagued with vacancies that have left long-lasting effects on the social qualities of the sidewalks along Mission Street. Surrounding this central spine, there exists another network, one that is less known to outsiders, but accessible and valuable to those who live in the neighborhood. This secondary network operates between areas of social infrastructure and social services for residents in the neighborhood. This secondary network is, in fact, the most important for Social Capital development in the neighborhood. While Excelsior does have a main commercial corridor, the spaces that are most valuable to neighborhood residents are those that are often seen as leftover space, such as backyards or alleyways.

By prioritizing these already existing networks of community care and growth, this project envisions establishing an organizational grid that will both provide both an organization to the Mission St. Commercial corridor, as well as activating East-West streets and highlighting access to the flanking green spaces.

Trans-Mission Activation
Three Grounds Analysis
Site: Excelsior SF

SAFEWAY

MISSION DE FLORES

ITALIAN AMERICAN
SOCIAL CLUB

COMMUNITY WELL

EXCELSIOR ACTION GROUP

PERSIA TRIANGLE

FILIPINO COMMUNITY
CENTER

PHATT CHANCE

EXCELSIOR PUBLIC LIBRARY

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible
Ground Floor

Bus Stops
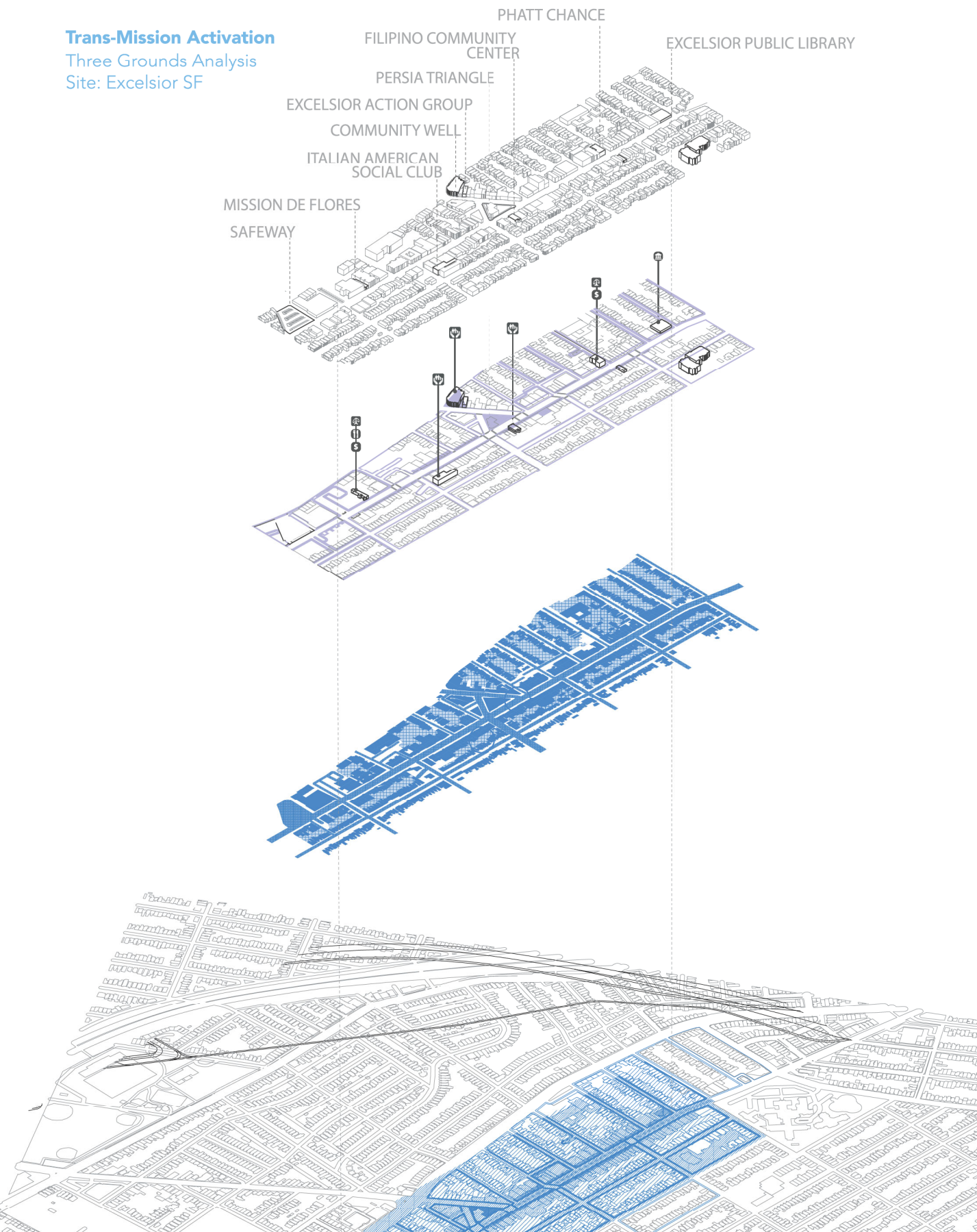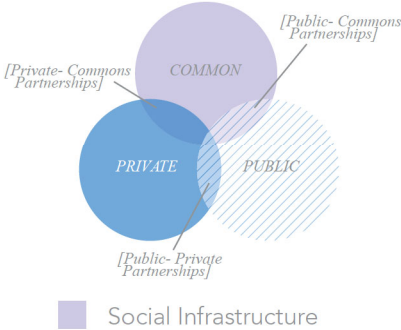
1 Artistic Nature

2 Local Food

3 Access to Green Spaces

4 Hidden Gems

5 Communal Spaces within
neighborhoods

6 Community Engagement

Urban Analysis Axonometric, Excelsior SF

Through the activation of trans-Mission (East-West) corridors and creation of the off-Mission Nodes with programs that encourage community engagement, commoning practices, as well as the sharing of resources and knowledge, this secondary network could become the primary system to connect the whole neighborhood with the businesses along the Mission Street commercial corridor.

Trans-Mission Activation
Collage and Ideo-logic Diagrams

Japantown SF Vision Collage

Placemaking is a process. It is a means to an end: the creation of quality spaces.

Social Capital is a product of human interaction. Creating areas this interaction can occur grows social capital, and in turn, financial capital.
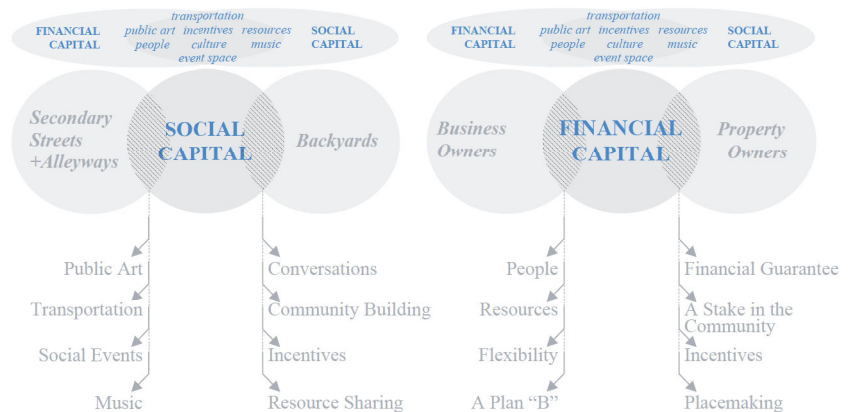
The prominent business district along Mission Street within Excelsior means the resources for financial capital must be considered.

Ideo-logic Diagrams

OUTREACH
Gather information
from Community

PINPOINT
Designate hubs of
activity and focus

BUDGET
Determine feasible
improvement options

OUT-TO-IN
Rather than focusing on
SF looking out, begin
with Excelsior

ENGAGE
Contact Community
activist groups

IMAGINE
Community-led design

SYNERGIZE
Consider available
assets such as zoning
and density changes

CHECK-IN
Re-establish
expectations and
outcomes, repeat

Excelsior SF Phasing Diagram

Backyards - West of Mission

facade improvements   public structures   upzoning

Businesses - West of Mission

business-flex   sidewalks   facade improvements

Backyards - East of Mission

ecological improvement   temporary uses   air rights

Businesses - East of Mission

upzoning   takeover   air rights
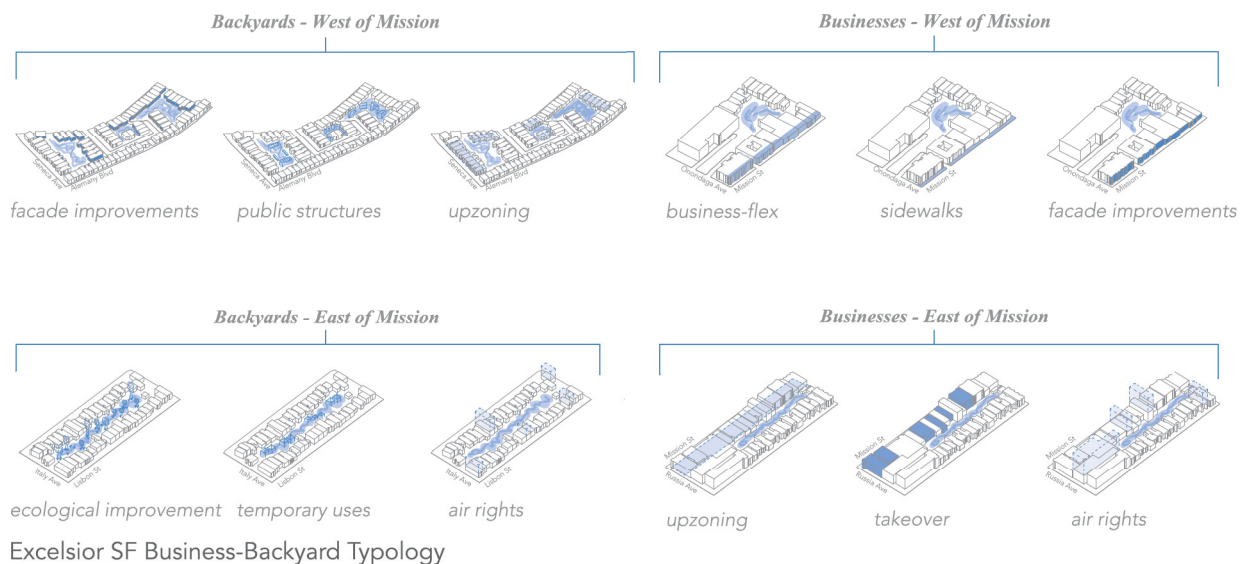
Excelsior SF Business-Backyard Typology

Through the opening of the ground floor
corner and the anchoring of "Restore"
(Phatt Chance), the base of a new activity
hub can be created, allowing for the redirec-
tion of activity.

By unifying and creating more open space
on the ground floor, activity can be redirect-
ed and concentrated around new nodes.
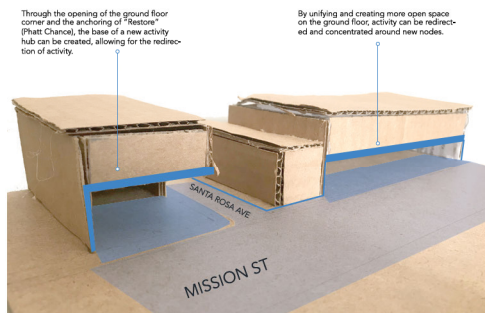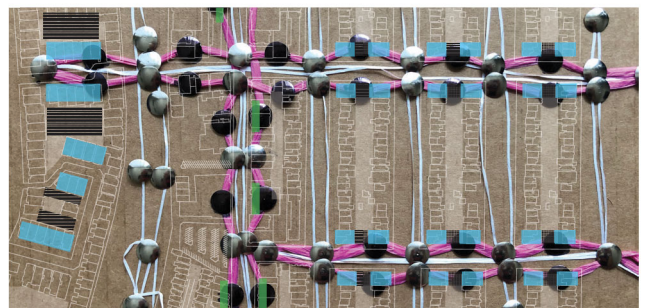
Study Model 1

Study Model 2

Study Models and Concept Development

We wish to organize the traffic and activity along the Mission Street Commercial corridor through the creation of specified nodes that increase trans-Mission activity. These trans-Mission streets then become the grid which organizes activity within Excelsior.

Trans-Mission Activation
Proposed Masterplan

SANTA ROSA AVE

MISSION ST

ALEMANY BLVD

MISSION ST

FRANCE AVE

ITALY AVE
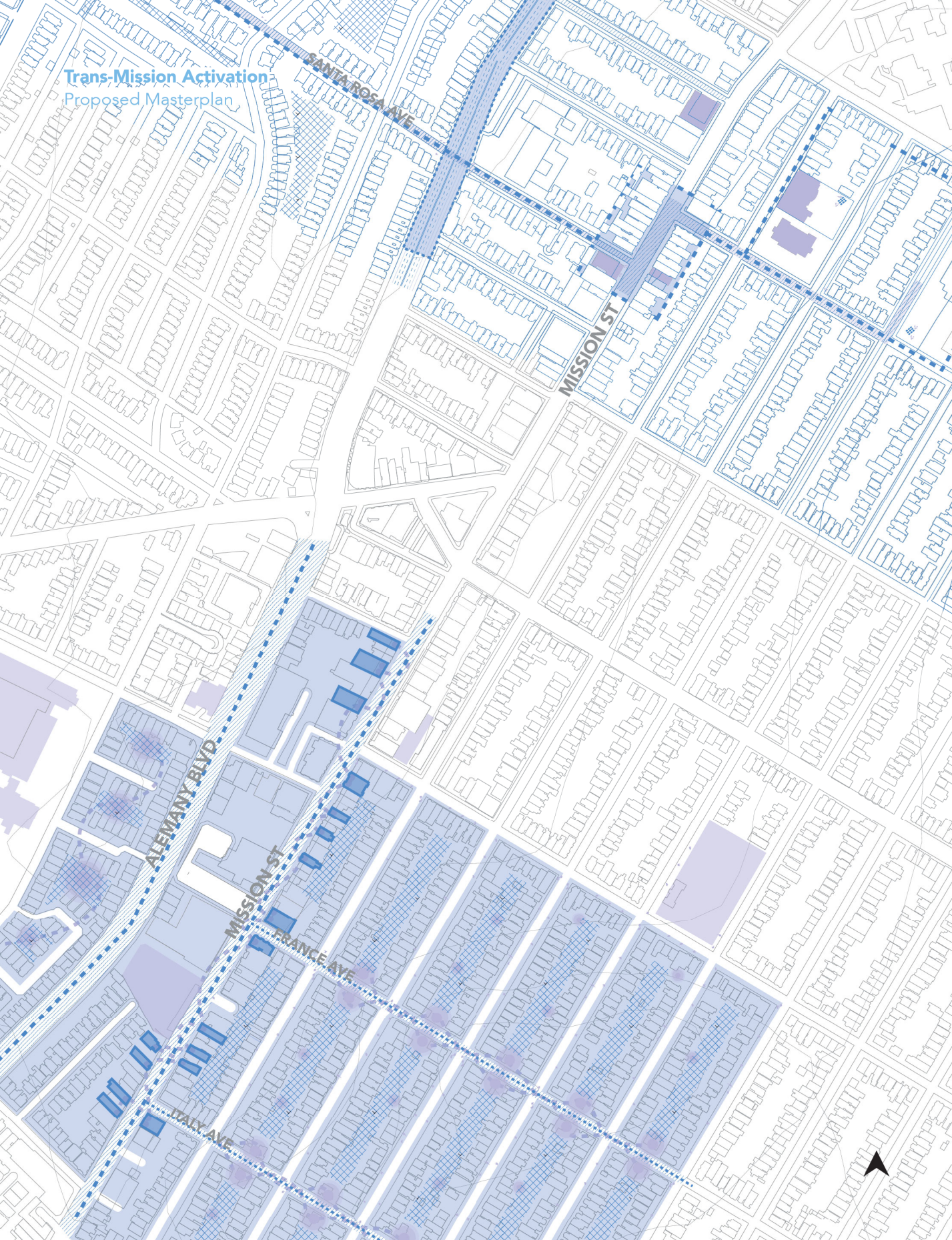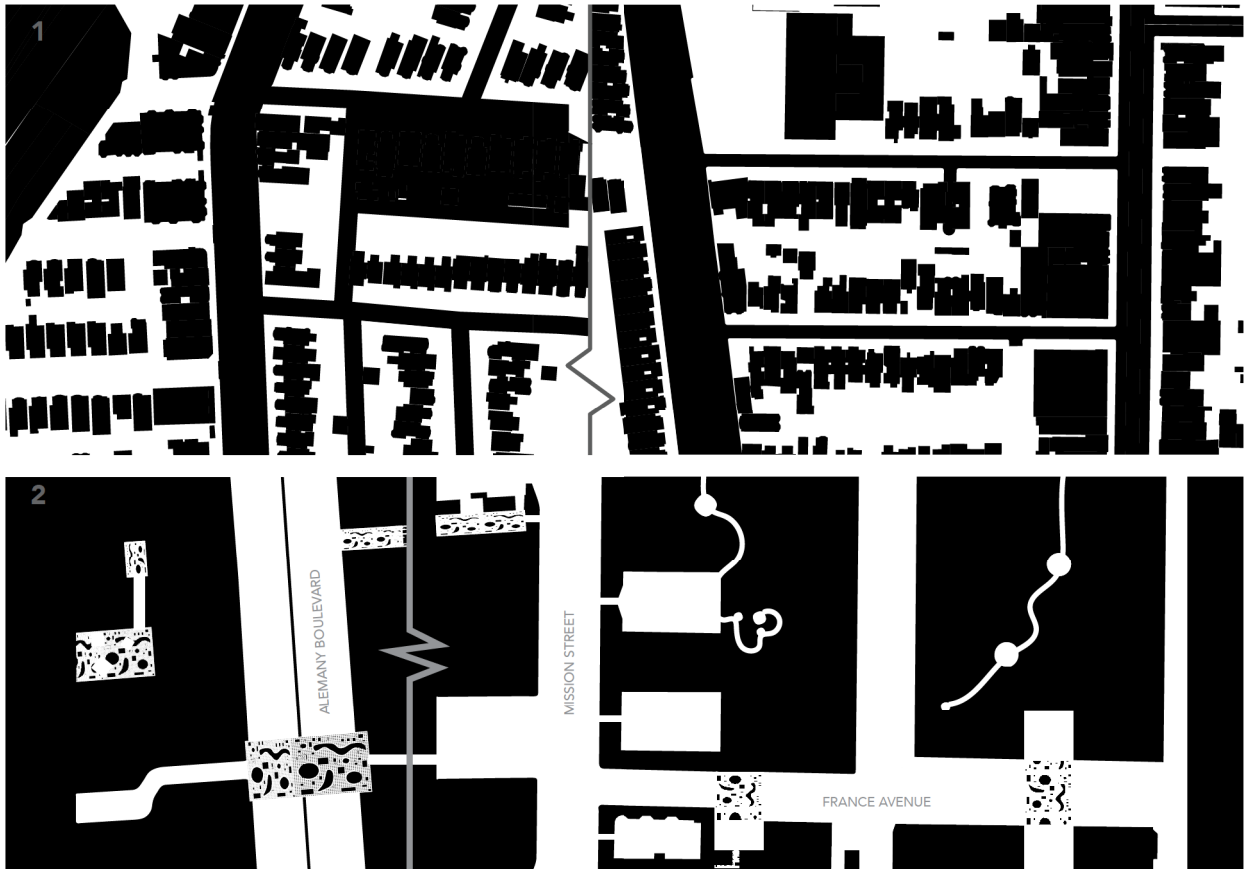
Spatial Mapping and Organization

1 Private vs Public Space: Restorative
Node

2 Private vs Public Space: Business Flex
Node

Urban Strategy Plan

☐ Commercial
Structures

▩ Areas of Social Infrastructure

⋰ New Pathways

A

B

C

D

E

F

ALEMANY BLVD
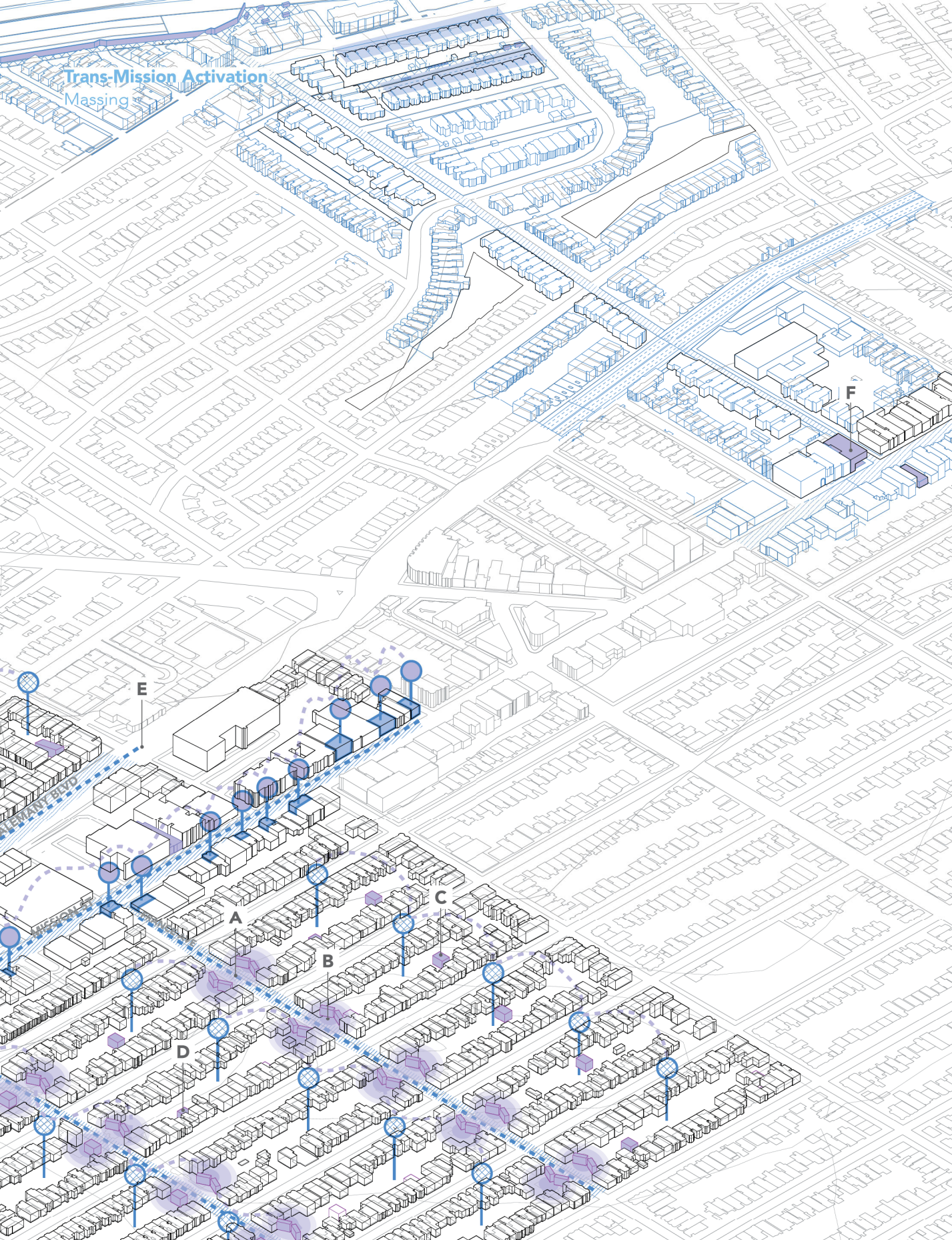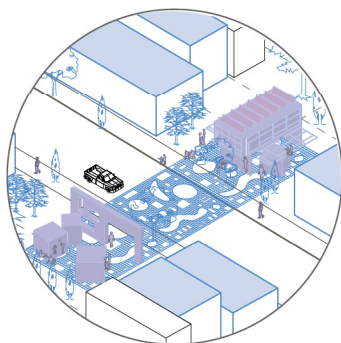
MISSION ST

A   Mosaic Crossings

Highlight artistic styles specific to Excelsior/Outer Mission
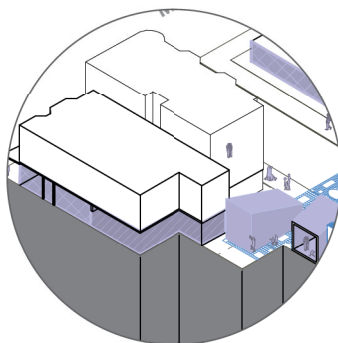
B   Financial Capital through Social Infrastructure

Businesses have increased oppurtunity for marketing and promotion through the use of public spaces.
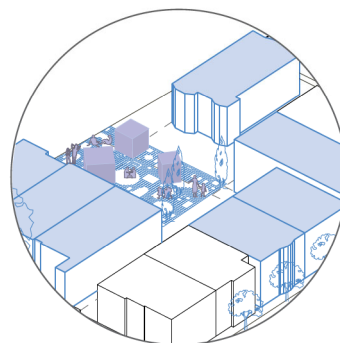
C   Public Backyards

These "backyards" become communal areas to host events or simply gather with neighbors from surrounding buildings.
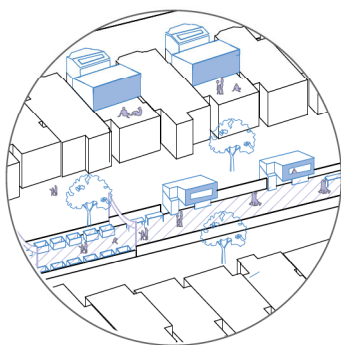
D   Alleyway ADUs

Utilizing unused alleyway space as a means of capital and leverage to increase homeowner power. Negotiations with Phatt Chance graduates, labor for living space, etc.
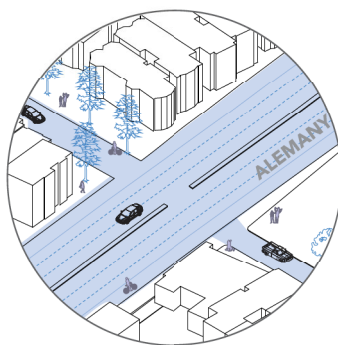
E   Slow Streets

Increasing activity along parallel streets to Mission Street will increase traffic along trans-Mission roads, allowing for better organization of activity and traffic along Mission.
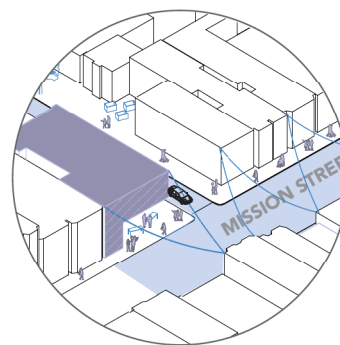
F   Restorative Anchor

The stewards for each node. Phatt Chance residents have oppurtunities for volunteer and engage with the Excelsior community through need-based services within each node.

Urban Strategy Axonometric

This drawing portrays the designation of varying "nodes" of activities across Excelsior that both interact with each other, and provide a specific focus for that area. At the intersection of France Ave. and Mission Street, the "Business Flex" & Public Backyard Node operates, focusing along the trans-mission access route of France Ave. To the north, along Mission Street and Santa Rosa Ave, the Restorative Justice Node anchors to Mission via the Phatt Chance community and residential center.

Restorative Node

The key to this node is options, so that both private owners and Phatt chance residents have and feel the ability to choose. In the dashed lines, we can again see the incoming density increases that are coming to this area. The purple later in the middle of these dashes indicate the potential air rights that exist for the property owners in the community. The most involved level of engagement involves the installation of ADUs that house "graduates" of Phatt Chance main house, phatt chance excelsior volunteer engagement program. Planter Boxes, Sales booths, about giving agency to the residents.

■ Private Space

■ Common Space - areas
formed to increase social capital

▨ Patterned Pavers to emphasize trans-Mission streets
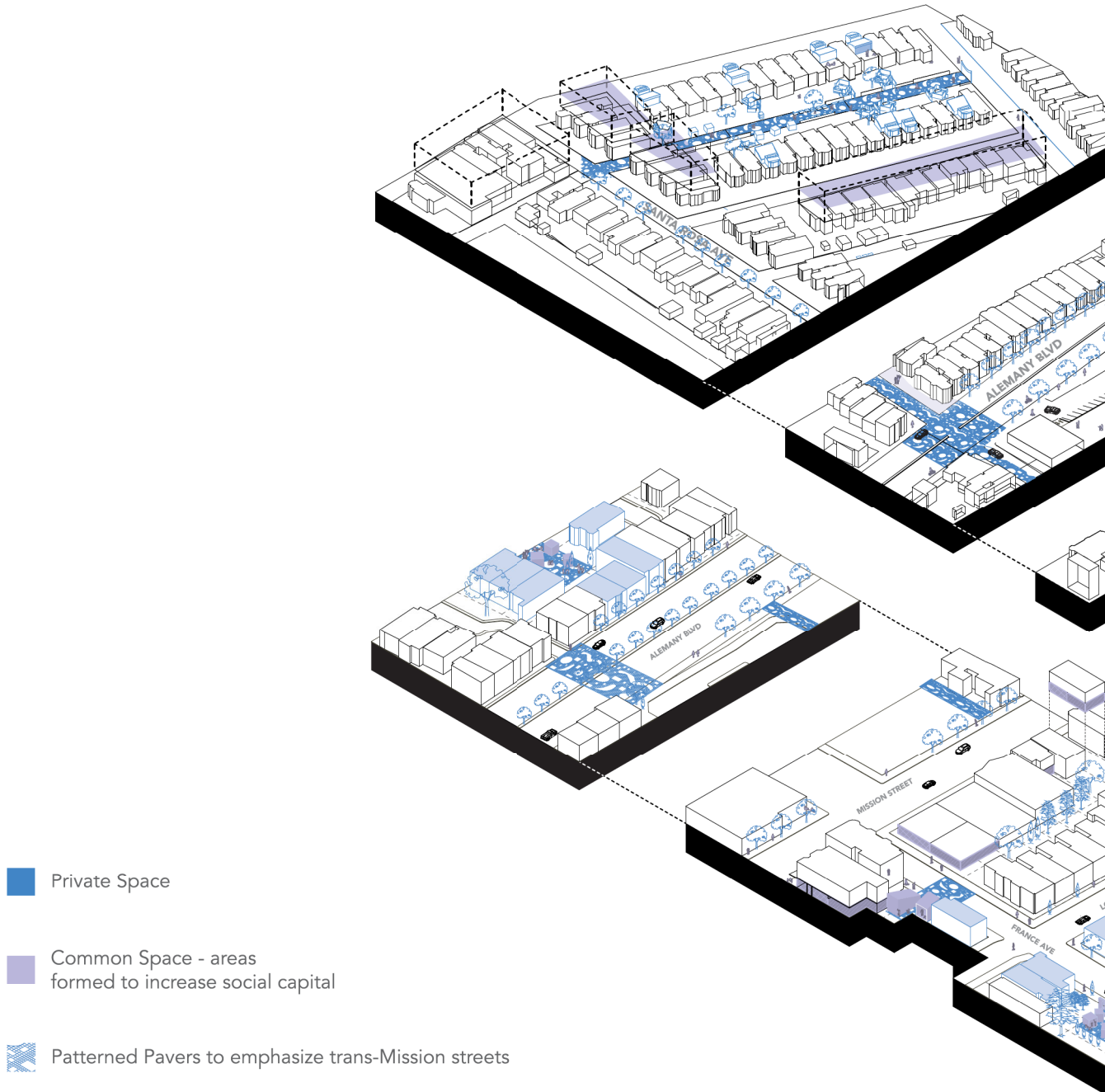
Business Flex Node

In the Business-Flex Node, here we see some possible business owners that have incorporated the Business-Flex model into their space along Mission. The highlight of this drawing is the Public Backyards, which are open and free to the public and community members, varying from open to enclosed spaces which depend heavily on what the community envisions happening there. A key design choice is the use of temporal pods or boxes that can be moved and positioned for any occasion.program. Planter Boxes, Sales booths, about giving agency to the residents.
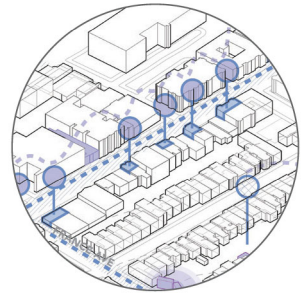
Business Flex
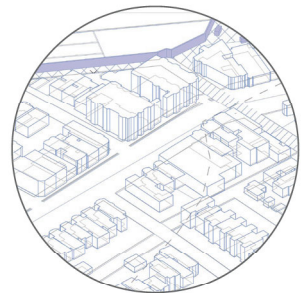
Transit Beautification
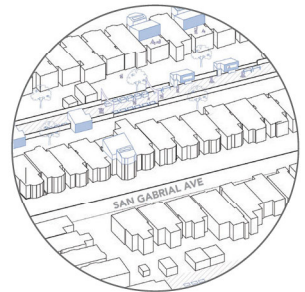
Alley Activation

Restorative Anchor

152

BUSINESS FLEX

BUSINESS OWNER A: RENTS BUSINESS SPACE ON MISSION STREET, LOSING $$$, CANT AFFORD RENT

BUSINESS OWNER B: WANTS BUSINESS SPACE ON MISSION STREET BUT DOES NOT WANT TO PAY HEFTY RENTAL FEES

BUSINESS OWNER A: LEARNS OF *BUSINESS-FLEX* OPPORTUNITY THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

BUSINESS OWNER A: EVALUATES BUSINESS HOURS + PROFITS, ESTABLISHES PRIORITY OPEN HOURS AND AVAILABLE *"FLEX HOURS"*

BUSINESS OWNER A + PROPERTY OWNER: A NEW LEASING AGREEMENT IS SIGNED WHICH ALLOWS A SECOND BUSINESS TO OPERATE IN THE SPACE DURING *"FLEX HOURS"*

BUSINESS OWNER B: LEARNS OF *BUSINESS-FLEX* THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

BUSINESS OWNERS A+B: BUSINESS OWNER B LEARNS OF OPEN *"FLEX HOURS"*

BUSINESS OWNERS A+B: BUSINESS CONVERSATION BEGINS AND HOW TO OPERATE TOGETHER

BUSINESS OWNERS A+B: BOTH BUSINESS NOW EXIST WITHIN ONE SPACE - OPERATING AT DIFFERENT TIMES AND PAYING A SPLIT RENT

PUBLIC BACKYARDS

LOCAL DANCE INSTRUCTOR:
WANTS TO SPREAD HER NAME IN THE INDUSTRY AND BUILD HER CLIENTELLE. SHE WAS BORN AND RAISED IN EXCELSIOR AND WANTS TO START TEACHING FREE OF CHARGE FOR PEOPLE IN HER COMMUNITY.

PUBLIC BACKYARD (PB) MANAGER:
MANAGES THE COMMUNITY OWNED SPACE ALONG WITH HANDLING THE SCHEDULE

LOCAL DANCE INSTRUCTOR + (PB) MANAGER: LOCAL DANCE INSTRUCTOR CONTACTS HER LOCAL *PUBLIC BACKYARD* FOR OPEN DATES AND TIMES TO USE THE COMMUNITY OWNED SPACE. (PB) MANAGER SCHEDULES HER DOWN ON AVAILABLE DATES AND TIMES.

LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS + (PB) MANAGER:
LEARN OF THE FREE DANCE CLASSES HAPPENING DOWN THE STREET FROM THEM FROM THE (PB) MANAGER AND RESERVE A SPOT IN THE CLASS.

LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS + LOCAL DANCE INSTRUCTOR:
COMMUNITY MEMBERS LEARN TO DANCE. THE DANCE INSTRUCTORE BUILDS UP HER REPUTATION AND CLIENTELLE

154

Business Flex

This drawing highlights the interior activity of an existing pupuse-ria, a Salvadorian restaurant, which has utilized the Business-Flex model and now shares their space with a small party planning organization.
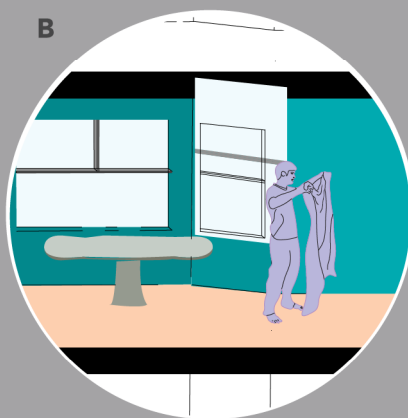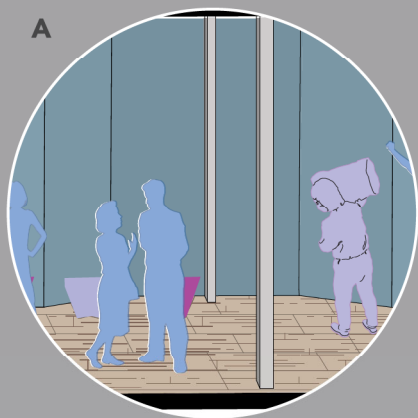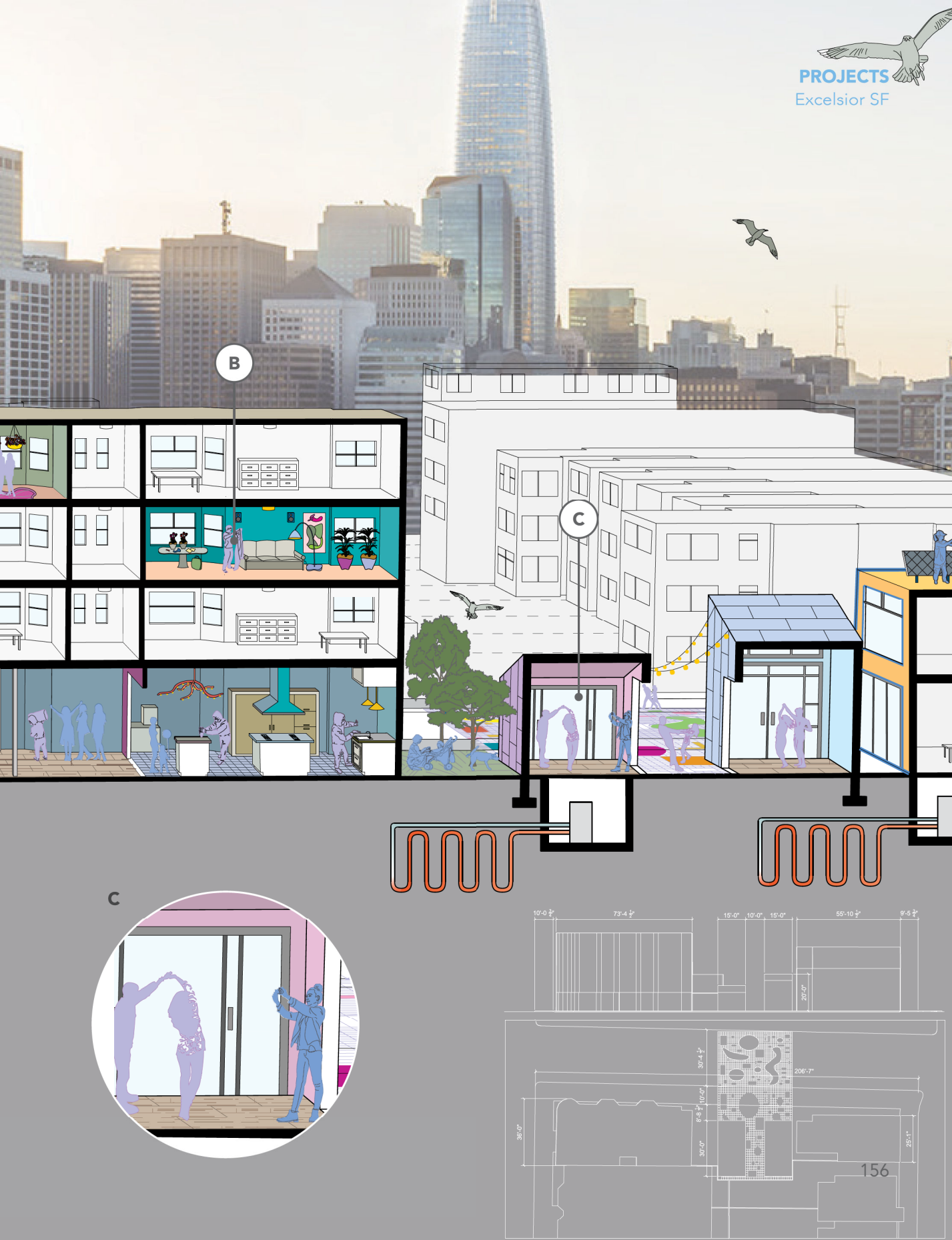
A

B

B

C

C

10'-0 ¾" | 73'-4 ½" | 15'-0" | 10'-0" | 15'-0" | 55'-10 ½" | 9'-5 ½"

20'-0"

206'-7"

30'-4 ½"

6'-8 ½" 10'-0"

36'-0"

30'-0"

25'-1"
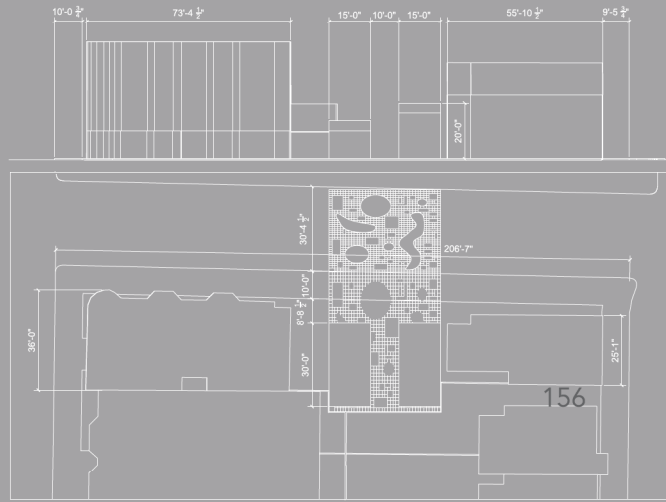
Alleyway Access

This drawing examines the ways property owners in these alleyways can begin to engage with the Phatt Chance volunteer program. By utilizing all aspects of their existing plot and land by building ADUs and increasing public access to the alleyways, homeowners can further improve their properties while increasing their ties to the community and increasing their financial and social stability in the midst of a changing landscape.

E

F
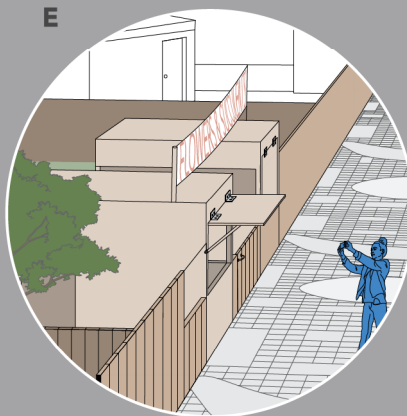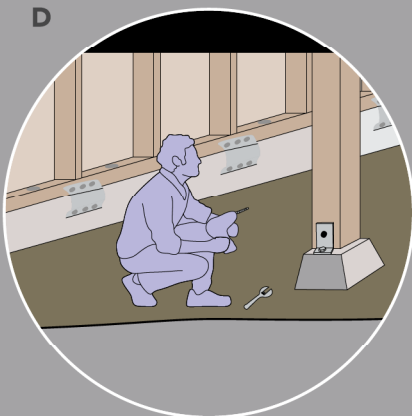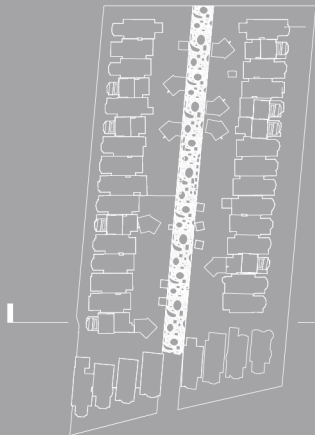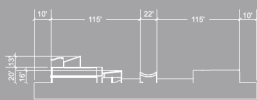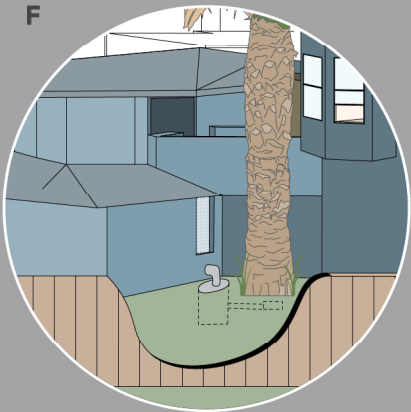
F

How do we give you something that you have never experienced, and how to take that experience to another level, another phase of the process; to be engaged from the White House to the outhouse and everything in between?

- Ms. Margaret Gordon

West Oakland

A Seat at the Table

Ms. Margaret Gordon
Co-Director of West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project
Gina Bugiada
Architect and co-founder of Equity Research Team
In conversation with Julia Grinkrug

Although West Oakland is the most historic part of Oakland it has suffered an appalling disinvestment and neglect over the years and now is fighting an ever increasing pressure of soaring housing prices. Will West Oakland fall prey to systemic erasure, associated with predatory forces of gentrification or will it retain its authentic unique identity? To ponder these complex questions, the *Common Ground* studio approached the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, one of the leading environmental justice organizations in the country who are spearheading the Community Benefits Agreement for the newly proposed Howard Terminal development by the Oakland A's in the Port of Oakland.

In this post studio interview, Ms. Margaret Gordon and Gina Bugiada shared their reflections on the community-academic partnership. Ms. Margaret Gordon is a legendary activist and a co-director of WOEIP; Gina Bugiada is a passionate social justice designer and a founding member of Equity Research Team, a dynamic group of designers who helped design and then participated in a community led process, working with the A's, the Port, and the City to design a CBA process that is collaborative and community focused, rooted in Equity.

JG: What were your motivations and expectations in joining educational partnerships with the Common Ground studio at CCA?

GB: I think that, in some respect, there is a motivation to always present something perfect to the students, so that they can just live in their sandbox. And I anticipated that our process would be so messy that they would be able to get a little bit out of the sandbox with us, and I thought that that would be very exciting. I thought it would go incredibly fast, so I didn't expect that we would get 100% of the way there; I didn't expect that we would solve the problem, but I did consider that with so many people collaborating together, coming from their different areas of expertise and experiences, we would at least identify the pinch points where the trouble spots were.

Ms. Margaret Gordon at West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project. 2021

MG: One of the things that we, as Brian and I put it, want you to learn, [or rather] to *unlearn* and to learn [afresh] is how to be engaged with the community and our process. I always see that what they [colleges] have taught you, and what society has taught you, sometimes comes in a contradiction. And then, when you come and start engaging, participating with Brian and I, you see another element, that you had had no idea existed, a process that has not been utilized as part of civil society. I thought: "How do we give you something that you have never experienced, and how to take that experience to another level, another phase of the process; to be engaged from the White House to the outhouse and everything in between, to have that experience?"

"How do we give you something that you have never experienced, and how to take that experience to another level, another phase of the process; to be engaged from the White House to the outhouse and everything in between?"

We knew that you've never had that level of experience, so we had to treat you like a can opener, crank you up a little bit by little bit at a time to keep your balance. I think that that really gave you the ability to start rooting yourself in, and growing and sprouting to see the bigger picture; I have a vision for the bigger picture to have to educate.
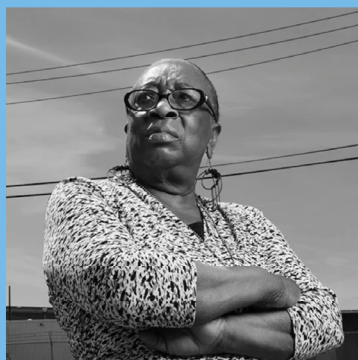
Ms. Margaret Gordon

That's what I always see as part of our methodology, our legacy - creating new levels of individuals, embracing this process; generating people that want to know more. And that was something I was not really expecting myself [when I started].

JG: What value do you think such interactions with academia may provide for the community that you represent and care for?

MG: This is a service on both sides! There's a service to the community also to empower them, to give them power to perform as equals, and for this type of community like West Oakland, to bring depth and breadth to the process. And that's what has happened.

GB: There is merit in bringing in and educating and opening up people [from the outside], who are completely unaware, and then there's also a value in providing permission to those people who either are directly impacted and are trying to assimilate for societal acceptance; to give them permission to speak their own mind, and then also give people permission to have suspicions, to begin to practice speaking out loud about things like this. Open conversations and engagement provide permission to people, who possibly weren't able to see what needed to be done, or should be talked about, because of the way that society has put its feedback-loops in place, the permissions hadn't been granted before.

MG: Right! So we made the space in a place for all that. This was the vision of an outcome that has put us in a spotlight, that showed that we were legitimate, we have the data, we have research, we have competence there. That made people willing to invest their time and strategies and ideas, and to hear other strategies and ideas,

and to have a place to agree to disagree, to struggle for unity for one struggle -- we set the place for all those things to happen. But at the end of the day, we all were able to see this outcome and to be able to clarify this outcome, and it was not about an "I", it was about the "we" doing this.

JG: Building on that, how would you define the core mission of your organizations (WOEIP and ERT)?

GB: I'm thinking that one way to define our mission is that we're always trying to educate people about what their true power is, and whatever kind of preconceived notion they had about who was powerful and why they were powerful, we try really, really hard to pull the curtain back from the wizard of Oz and show you how ridiculous these people are.

MG: That's another look at education that the civil society does not practice. How do you dismiss what power is? Because who you are, where you live, where you work, where you come from, what church you go to, all those different things should not put you in a place where you cannot vocalize your experience of being disadvantaged, underserved – a feeling that you are being less than others, and not being in a place to be able to express that.

Ms. Margaret Gordon and Brian Beveridge Walking Tour in West Oakland. 2021

"Because who you are, where you live, where you work, where you come from, what church you go to, all those different things should not put you in a place where you cannot vocalize your experience of being disadvantaged, underserved – a feeling that you are being less than others, and not being in a place to be able to express that."

And as [the community] members tell the truth, they understand their power and empowerment, a position, being positioned at the table. Because at the end of the day, we are setting the table for them to have the voice; them to have the strategy; them to understand how to do research and to collect data and to translate it based on THEIR life experiences, and that should be able to be obtained without any problems. [Instead of a mindset that] "now

i'll come up with a problem and will create disruption", even if you have the conflict and disruption, you got to know how to resolve it, how to work through those issues. In this way people pass all levels of fear factors, of being fearful of, always being afraid.

JG: Talking about power vs. fear, can you share how your work with the community helps them to regain confidence in their capacity to influence planning processes?

MG: We work with community members on how you come together and how you keep moving the ball and set the agenda. The key is how you set the agenda, because that's the first thing that makes people very powerless, is that they don't know how to set the agenda, because the agenda has always been set by somebody else for you. Now, if we sit at the table, you get to work on YOUR items of the agenda.

Gina Bugiada

GB: In order for everyone to have an equal seat at the table some people need more information, just to be on the same page. Transparency is also super important. Everybody has to kind of put all the cards on the table; because we're trying to make sure there's no trickery, that there's no "smoke and mirrors", we're all just being honest and that's how we are. That's how you build consensus- with facts and data.

MG: When we worked with ERT (Equity Research Team) towards their involvement in Howard Terminal's CBA process, we didn't just drop them there, and let them go. No! There was a methodology that we have perfected: We'll bring you [the ERT] along and have granular exposure, then we can talk about it; and then, when you go to the next meeting, we can sit back and let you go to ask the question. We wouldn't ask the question for you.

GB: One of the important parts about all this exposure was building relationships. That was something that I focused on for at least 20 years --- building relationships with everyone that I worked with, even your adversaries. You don't have to be best friends, but everything has to operate on trust. Especially being an architect, everybody has to trust you that you're not going to lead them astray, that you are capable of giving them the correct information, that you know when to ask the correct questions. And in any negotiation in any kind of collaborative consensus-building method you have to build trust, and I believe the only way to build trust is through relationships.

> *"In any negotiation in any kind of collaborative consensus building method you have to build trust, and I believe the only way to build trust is through relationships."*

JG: Do you believe that this work can restore the community's trust towards research and planning processes as a whole?

MG: A lot of this has to come with actual overall longevity of participation, being involved in various planning and advocacy processes over the years, until you start understanding the elements of what trust is with the government. Because we know governments - local, state, federal. We know what they did to West Oakland. They treated us very badly for over more than 50 years. So, when the issue of trust comes, it's based on people's living experiences of being engaged in these things -- how that has transformed this community and people over the years. That has transformed individuals over the years, and some of us are still here... TRYING to trust the process. Are we

City Slicker Farms in Oakland. 2021

engaging in the process? Because you've got to have the trust in the process to be engaging and participate. No matter how stressful it is and how frustrating; still, if you are sitting down at that table, you're trusting something. It's got to be some trust there - of engagement. There's got to be some trust to build relationships with somebody.

> *"That has transformed individuals over the years, and some of us are still here... TRYING to trust the process."*

GB: It's not that we don't totally trust any of those people that we built relationships with. We don't trust that they're not going to get caught up in the current state of the existing system once they walk away from us. I think this is why our expectations for the studio were initially low; because the three months is just not enough time to embrace the most important part of collaboration, which is building relationships.

JG: If you're looking back at our studio experience of learning

together and bringing the students to the process, how do you feel about the outcome?

GB: If I think about what we could do better is to confront the "ivory tower" model of the academy, which is rooted in Western colonialism, and which we accidentally are still competing to maintain... Because we accidentally are saying: "Oh if i'm not this powerful billionaire white man, I must need to do better somewhere in order to be as powerful as this person". If we want to change that, then we should not try to work in the system to achieve that, we should talk about how the system is tricking us, how the system is not helping and what actually needs to get done. I think one of the ways we can try to de-extractify the 15-week courses is rather than make the students think that they need to work on something and then give it to a community that will never be connected to; I think that it would be much more helpful if every student tried to imagine where they wanted to be after graduation and started to diagram out the power structures of where they want to work and start finding people they want to connect with and start building relationships with.

MG: Well, you know, that's something very personal. You've got to either take personal responsibility for where you are trying to go or not intervene at all. How do you start taking the pen and open up that darkness to let in some light of where you are trying to go? I think one of the things that has happened to us, here in the United States, was that we mistake our behavior with what is the mechanics of it. We went from industrialization mechanics, to computerization mechanics, now we're gonna have AI mechanics. Our minds are all wrapped around what that is. But we are not dealing with human beings. That's the disconnect that we have been putting ourselves in -- the mindset of commercialization: of what is trending, and how do we keep it up. It's always about the "I" and very seldom about the "We". But even inside the "I", how do you insert yourself into the "we"?

> *It's always about the "I" and very seldom about the "We". But even inside the "I", how do you insert yourself into the "We?"*

To be in an understanding of different modes of engagement and what that means to society, where you live, work and play, means to go beyond the mechanics. You have a stake in this process, to be a stakeholder, and speak; to be able to bring your experience to this table, to make change and bring prosperity. Prosperity, I say, and I want to distinguish between prosperity and privilege. We are not elevating people to talk about some of us, few of us to have prosperity. Me, as an advocate, I'm talking about PROSPERITY FOR ALL.

Mandela Parkway replaces the Oakland's cypress freeway (1998).

The Ripple Effect

Sanyukta Bhagwat

West Oakland, a district located along the waterfront at the Port of Oakland and a few miles west of Downtown Oakland has experienced a history of political power. Once a cultural haven centered around the main 7th street, it is now left with remnants of decaying infrastructure, warehouses and empty lots. It is a result of not only the influx of money and people, but the forced urban redevelopment, unjust gentrification, and eminent domain abuses. From which, it has led to an unequal redistribution of capital and a new form of racial segregation.

Due to a large amount of disinvestment and financial disenfrnachisement in the past, an emergence of a 'Commons platform' is the key to revitalize the cultural, social and economical ground of the Cypress Village neighbourhood in West Oakland. The focus area runs along the Mandela Parkway in this neighbourhood; which is an important green spine.

The goal of the project is to preserve the existing systems and identities of the Parkway that are prominent; and then puncture in the ground for the social life to be activated and visible. An open stage where community can come together, share, communicate and talk about their future!

The proposal seeks to strategise 'Incremental development' by structural interventions and activations that can be accomplished over a phase of time to release energy and create a postive 'RIPPLE EFFECT'. This in turn will address the urgency of not only social and cultural grounds, but also long term issues such as economic deprivation, environmental and food-access injustices.

Focusing on activating the frontages and need-based solutions for those chronic problems along the Mandela Parkway is the leading strategy.

The Ripple Effect
Three Grounds Analysis
Site: West Oakland

COMMON

[Public- Commons Partnerships]

[Private- Commons Partnerships]

PRIVATE

PUBLIC

[Public- Private Partnerships]

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops
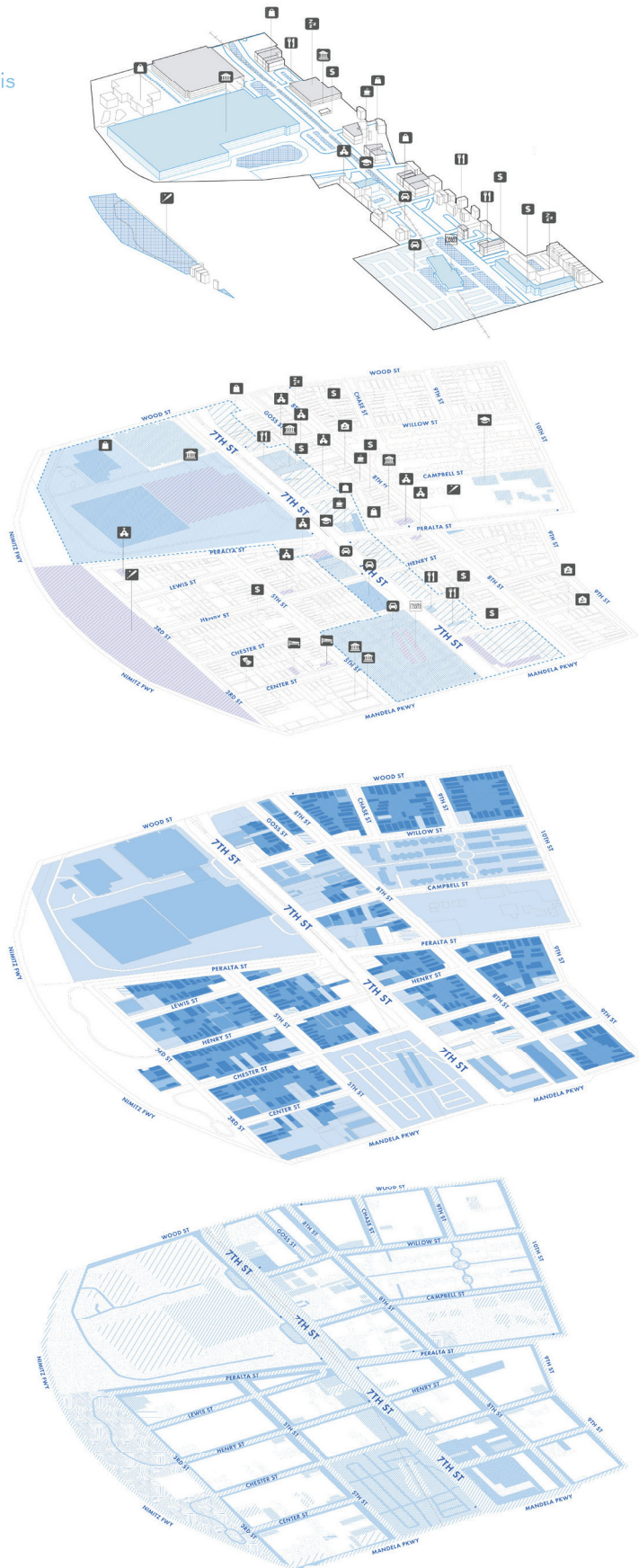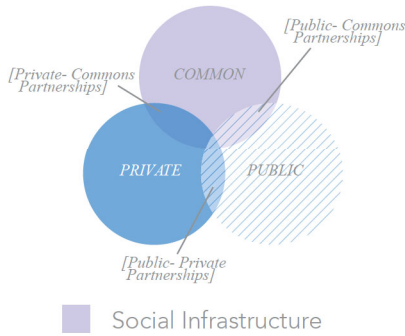
1   Interstate 880- Cypress street Freeway 1980

2   Mandela Parkway- Current situation

3   Black Panther Party 1966

4   7th Street Corridor 1920

5   Mandela Grocery co-operative 2009

6   Cultural institutions-Church

Urban Analysis Axonometric, Mandela Parkway

West Oakland has been known for its rich culture and Black Power movements rooted in place and community. To support this legacy of community-led activism and to comfront institutional disinvestment, this project invisions an emergence of a 'commons platform' with puncturing of tactical and permanent interventions is the key to overall Cypress Neighbourhood activation. The focus area runs along the Mandela Parkway; major north-south median-divided street with pre-dominant residential area.

170

The Ripple Effect
Collage and Ideo-logic Diagrams

Mandela Parkway Vision Collage

Social Circuit
Mandela Parkway
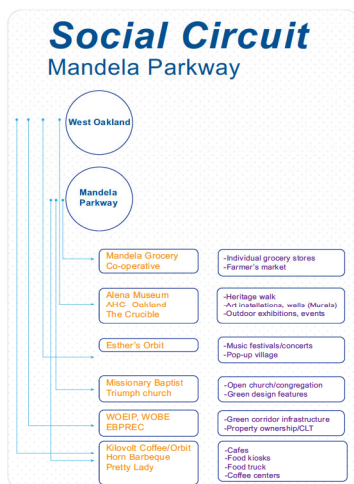
West Oakland thrives with a rich history, and small scale local businesses.

Sustainability
Mandela Parkway
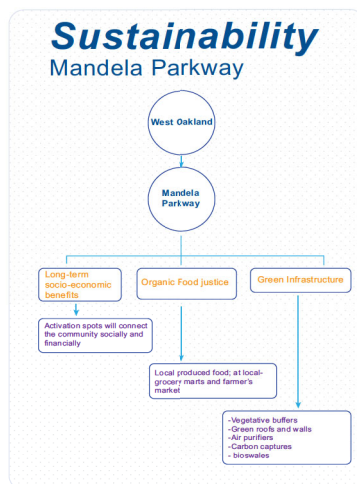
West Oaklanders can feel and share a space with a healthy and thriving environment.

Equity
Mandela Parkway
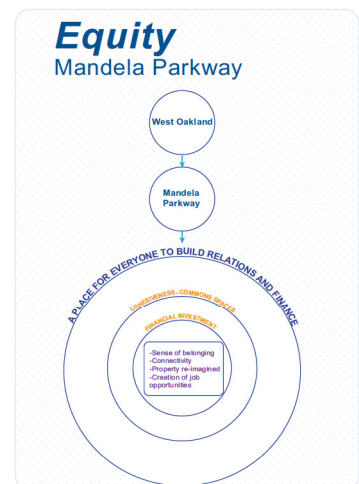
West Oakland can thrive with building relationships and finance.

Ideo-logic Diagrams

INFRASTRUCTURE + SERVICES

1a
Local Storefronts

1b
Kiosks (food, drinks)
☀ ☾

1c
Cafeteria
☀ ☾

1d
Resilience hub/
youth center
☀

1e
Sustainable housing-
shipping containers
☀ ☾

RECREATIONAL

2a
Parklets
☀ ☾

2b
Open Air theatre
☀ ☾

2c
Farmer's Market
☀

2f
Running+Biking tracks
☀ ☾

2e
Sandpit playarea
☀

2f
Information booth
☀ ☾

2g
Wi-Fi kiosks
☀

2h
Children's playarea
☀

2i
Foodtrucks
☀ ☾

2j
Tennis courts
☀

ART + CULTURE

3a
Artists expressions
☀ ☾

3b
Grafitti/murals
☀ ☾

3c
Art Pavilion/Alena
museum/The Crucible
☀ ☾

3d
Street Artists-
outdoor platform
☀ ☾

3e
Art Gallery
☀

ENVIRONMENTAL

4a
Bioswales
☀ ☾

4b
Community gardens/ urban farms
☀ ☾

4c
Sustainable landscape
☀ ☾

4d
Air purifiers & Carbon captures
☀ ☾

Mandela Parkway Space Typology
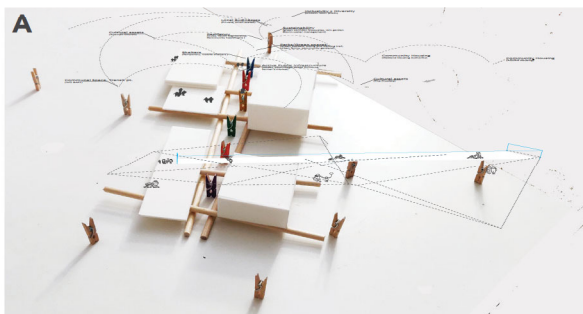
Study Model 1, Social Circuit
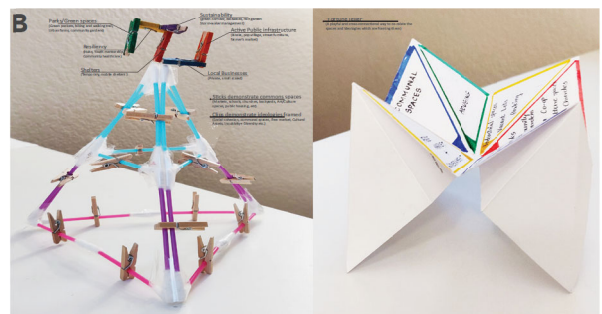
Study Model 2, Modules

Study Models and Concept Development

The project's vision a variety of life along the important spine of West Oakland; that experienced a history of substraction and disinvestment; and which is now in the process of negotiation.The goal is to connect the existing communal, cultural assets programmatically and propose new values/programs to amplify the 'Social circuit' of cultural production.

172

The Ripple Effect
Proposed Masterplan

Placemaking 3
Activation zone 6
Farmer's market
Festivals
Urban furniture
Wifi- booth
Local Artists expressions/
Art installations

Activation zone 5
Open Air theater
Sandpit area
Foodtrucks

Placemaking 2
Activation zone 4
Pop-up shops
Biking/running/walking way
Landscape mounds
Urban furniture
Wifi- booth

Placemaking 1
Activation zone 3
Small cafes
Biking/running/walking way
Landscape features
Green roof
Urban furniture
Wifi- booth
Art installation- A

Pocket Plaza
Activation zone 2
Urban plaza
Storefronts/grocery and
food marts
Children playareas
Wifi- booth

Gateway to the parkway
Activation zone 1
Information booth
Art wall/installation -M
Greenscape

1

2

3

4

5

A set of strategies focusing on the ideologics, values and programs proposed. The strategies will create interconnected urban fabric through temporary and permanent activation elements and development infrastructure

Spatial Mapping and Organization

1 Map of spatial organisation with typologies

2 Temporal diagram: timeline showing the usage pattern

5 Activation nodes: Area of legibility and activation

3 Co-grounding: Public and Private footprint

4 Public spine: Accessibilty and permeability

174

The Ripple Effect
Massing

Green Roof and landscape + Environmental elements (City council, WOEIP, ERT)

Triumph Church

Center street Missionary Baptist

Cyrpress Memorial Park

PHASE 2

Community Garden (Center Street community ranch/City Slicker Farms)

Farmer's Market/Flea Market (Mandela Grocery Co-op, Family Market)

PHASE 1

Mandela Grocery Coperative

Mandela Parkway/Boulevard

A

B

C

Mandela Gateway Apartments

Supermarkets + Retail stores (Mandela Grocery Co-op, Oaklandish, Oakland Supply Co., Flax Art and Design)

M of Heritage walk + Information booth (AHC Oakland/The Crucible)

Public plaza + Open air theatre + Playarea + Convenience store (City Council, Alena Museum, local entrpreneurs)

A   The Gateway

Creates a entrance for the boulevard with a 'M' as a Heritage walk structure displaying history and fun facts about West Oakland.
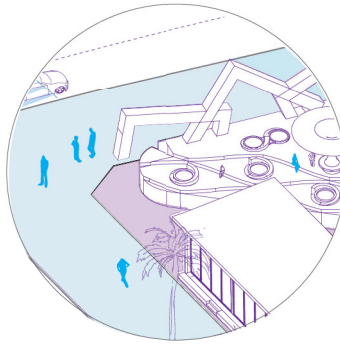
B   The plaza

A public plaza with green space for different activities that support community and business events. It has an open theatre.
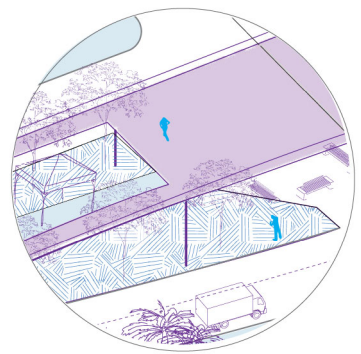
C   The Skywalk

A framework landscape with undulations; for space usage above and under. It has an open church to congregate.
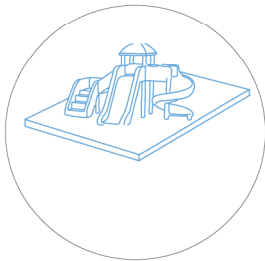
Children playzone

Provides space for children to engage in the public arena with fun activities. The playarea with all safety measures for toddlers.
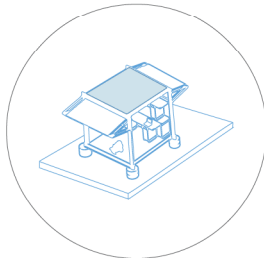
Market Kiosk/Stands

Provides space for community members to participate in informal retail and farmers market (e.g. take-out/curiosity stands).
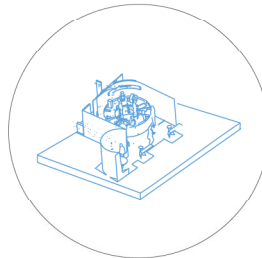
Art exhibitions

Provides space for community members to participate and exhibit the local art and culture (e.g. galleries)
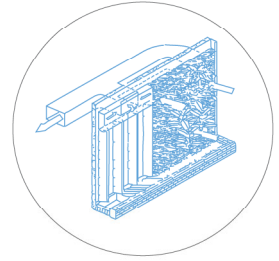
Air purifiers and Carbon captures

Inhibits sustainable approaches for more greening effect. The Skywalk features a blend of urban aesthetics and technology.

Proposed Masterplan Axonometric

This drawing demonstrates the incremental development along the Mandela Parkway through three phases. It proposes tactical and permanent solutions to the immediate needs of Cypress Neighborhood. As a prime move, the design proposes to create an undulating series of green roofs and grounds along the Mandela Parkway; as a Green Boulevard. It includes scafolded infrastructure that will include aesthetical and greening elements. The proposal creates a platform for social cohesion of the community through social, economic and cultural space activation.

176

Immersive Street View

The three phases evolve in a dialogue with each other both visually and programmatically, creating enough space for commerce and community. The porosity and tacticality of the plans challenges the modes of ownership with designated space for collaborative and temporal use. The implementation of pop-ups, wayfinding, and microevents transforms the Mandela Parkway into a vibrant boulevard and dense social circuit. This is an urban connectivity concept to leverage the Mandela Parkway strip assets (residences, frontages, vacant properties, parks) into an improved "social network".

Community garden/urban farm

Pop-up village/foodtrucks

ADU's of shipping containers (Homelessness)

Farmer's market/ Open church

Skywalk-series of ground floor and roof spaces

Future Developments

Mandela Grocery co-operative

Gateway to the parkway

Mandela Gateaway Apartments

Plaza and playarea
Local shops/Storefronts
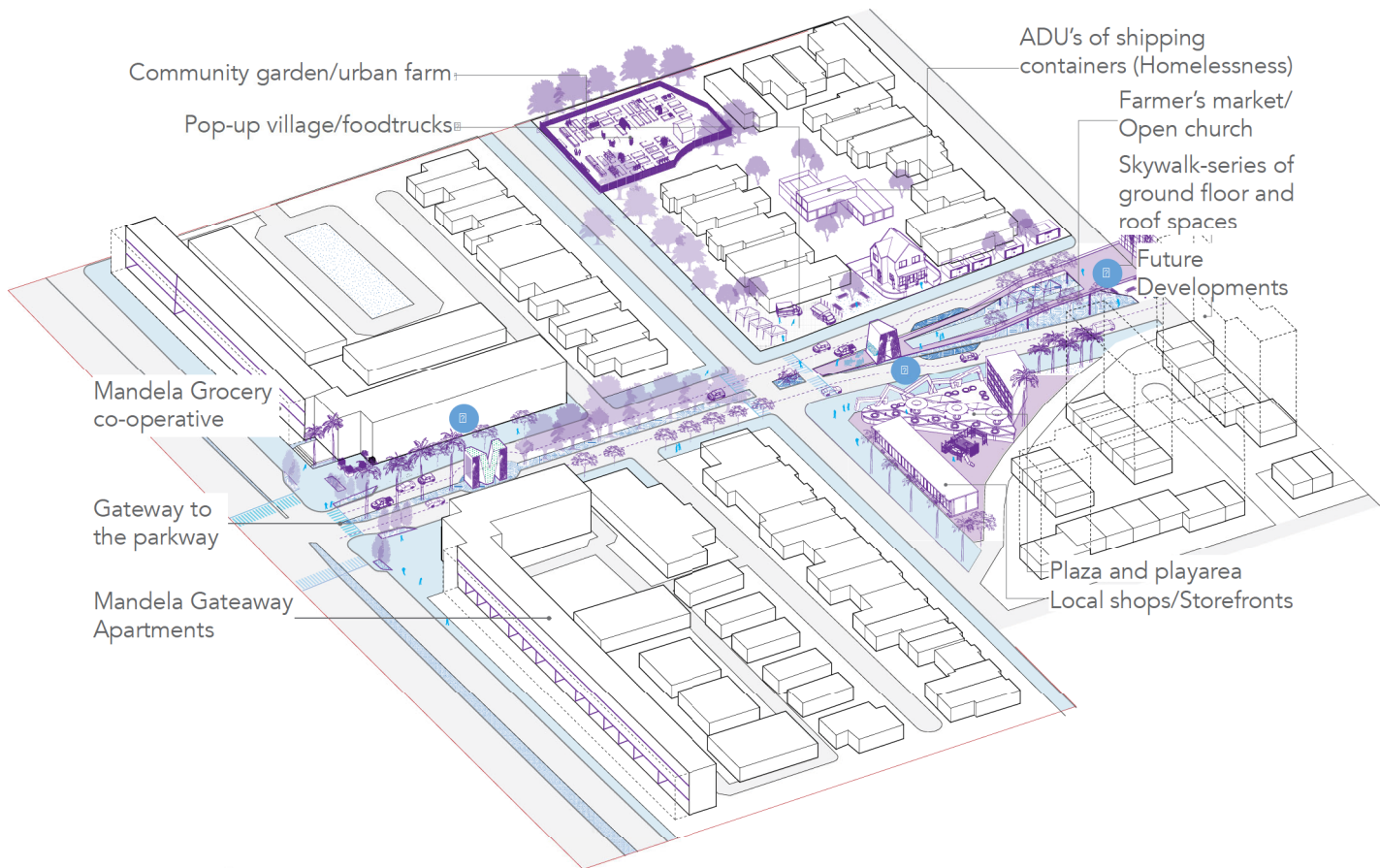
Legend

- Social Infrastructure - Public Space (Sidewalks)

- Street Realm proposed - Privately owned public spaces

- Mandela Parkway activation zone
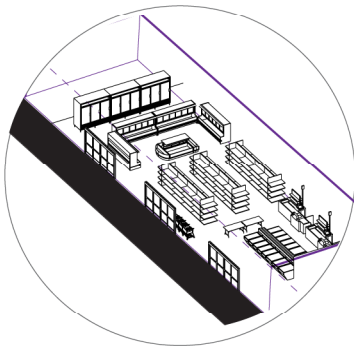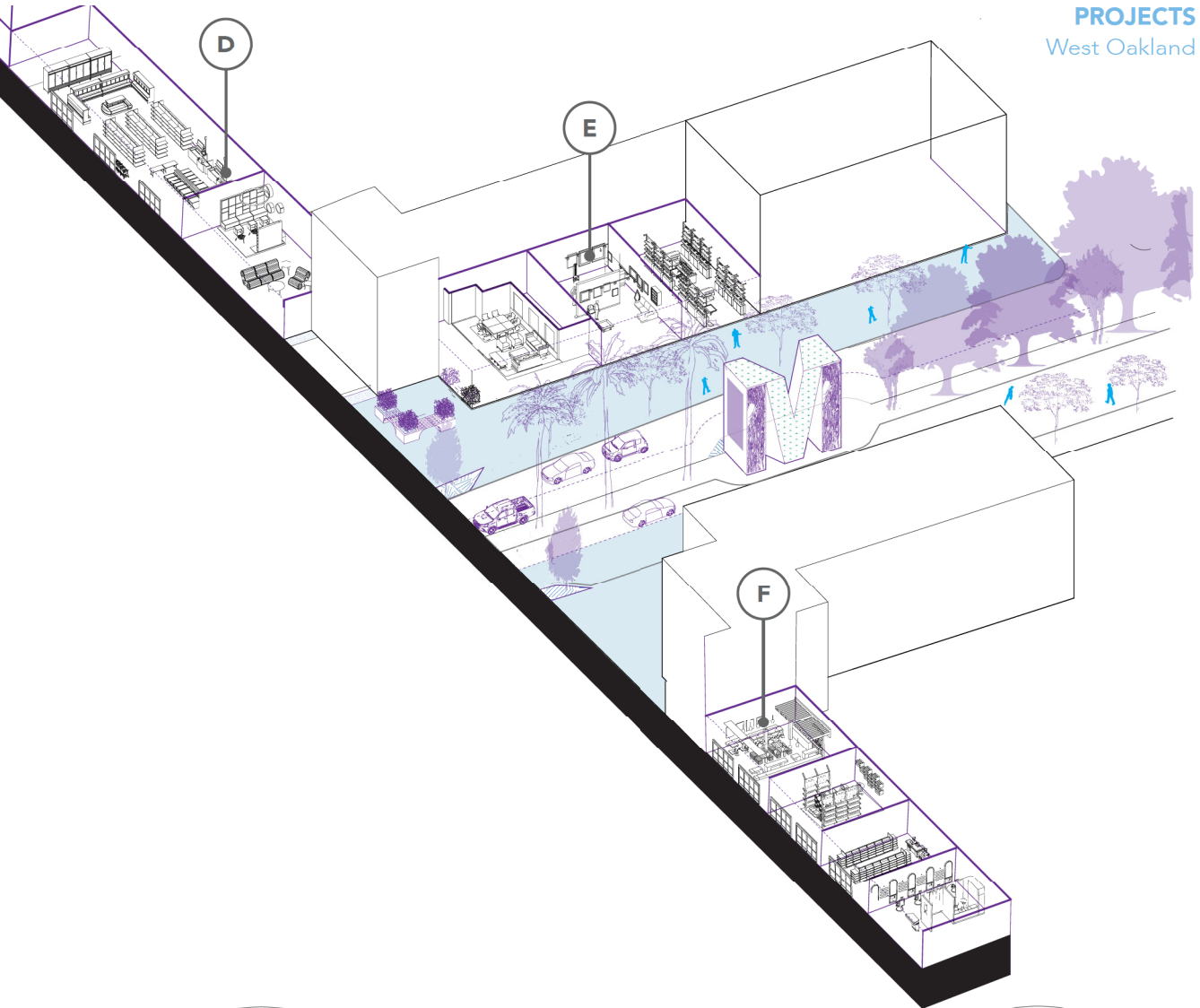
D   Local groceries stores

Space for local produce and groeceries to cope against the food desserted area.
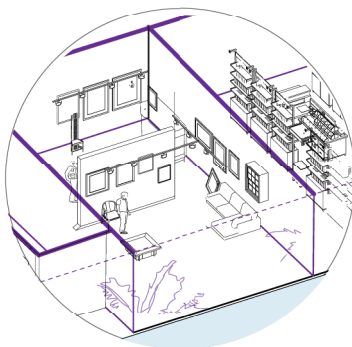
E   Art galleries

Platform of Media wall, mural art, and light installations for the local artisans to thrive
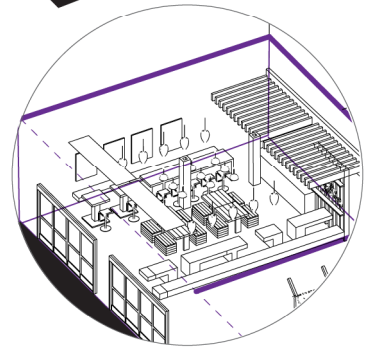
F   Restaurants/Local eateries

Space for local flavors and entrepreneurs into food industry. This will bring in food justice and economy
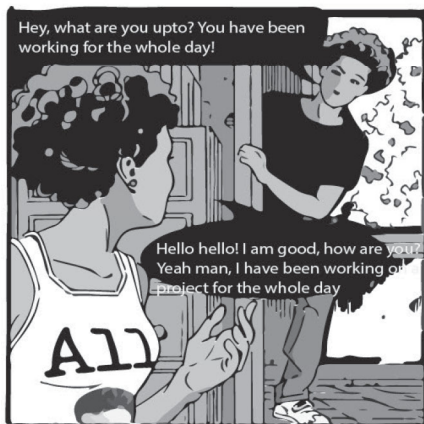
178
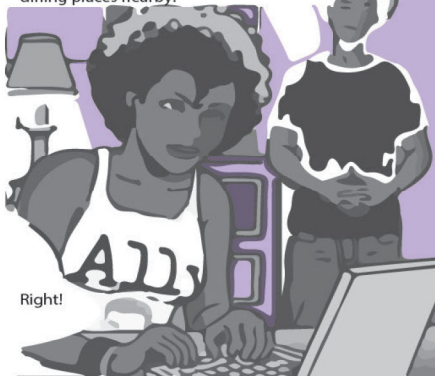
West Oaklander's wish - Before and after scenario along the Mandela Parkway towards the proposal

courtesy: tinyview.com

Benefit District - Local entrepreneurs and businesses network and share resources.

The Ripple Effect
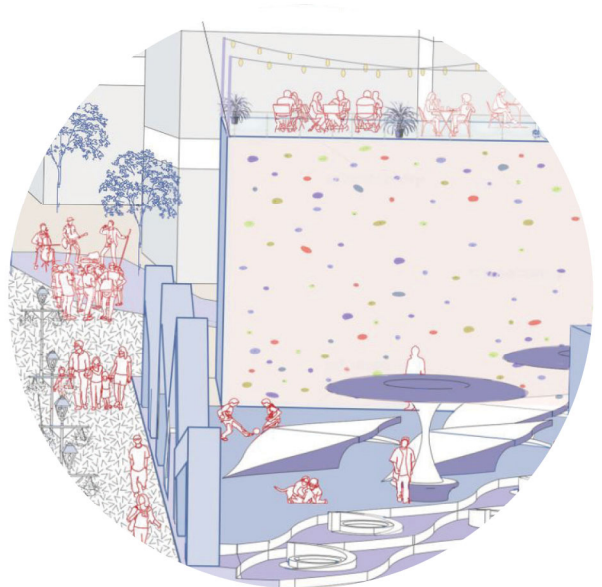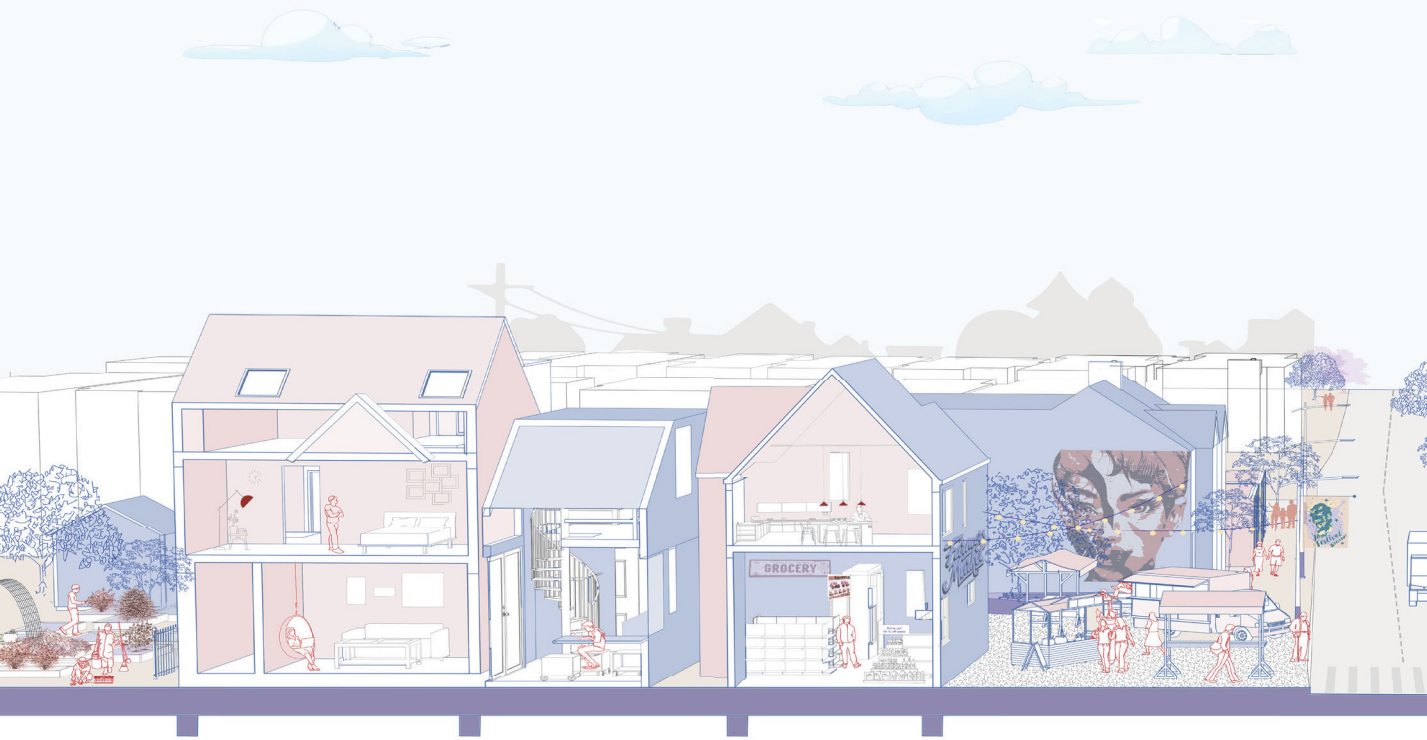
Section Perspective

A view of the main green corridor - Mandela Parkway, shows an active street frontages both outside and inside the buildings. The ground floor is revitalized through multi-purpose programs that deviates from the standard retail spaces. It shows the interconnection between the private and public entities forming a social network; providing a 'Commons Platform'
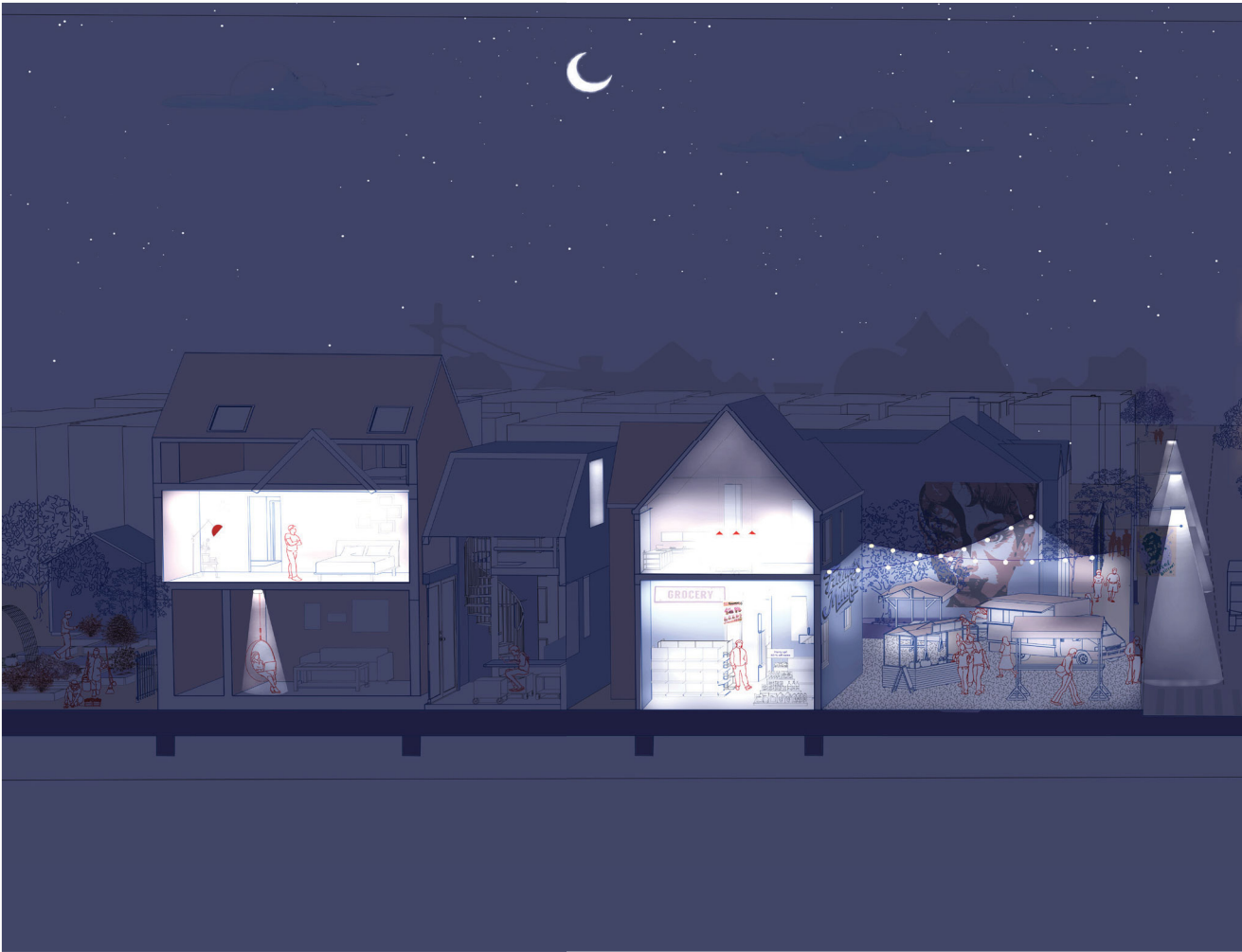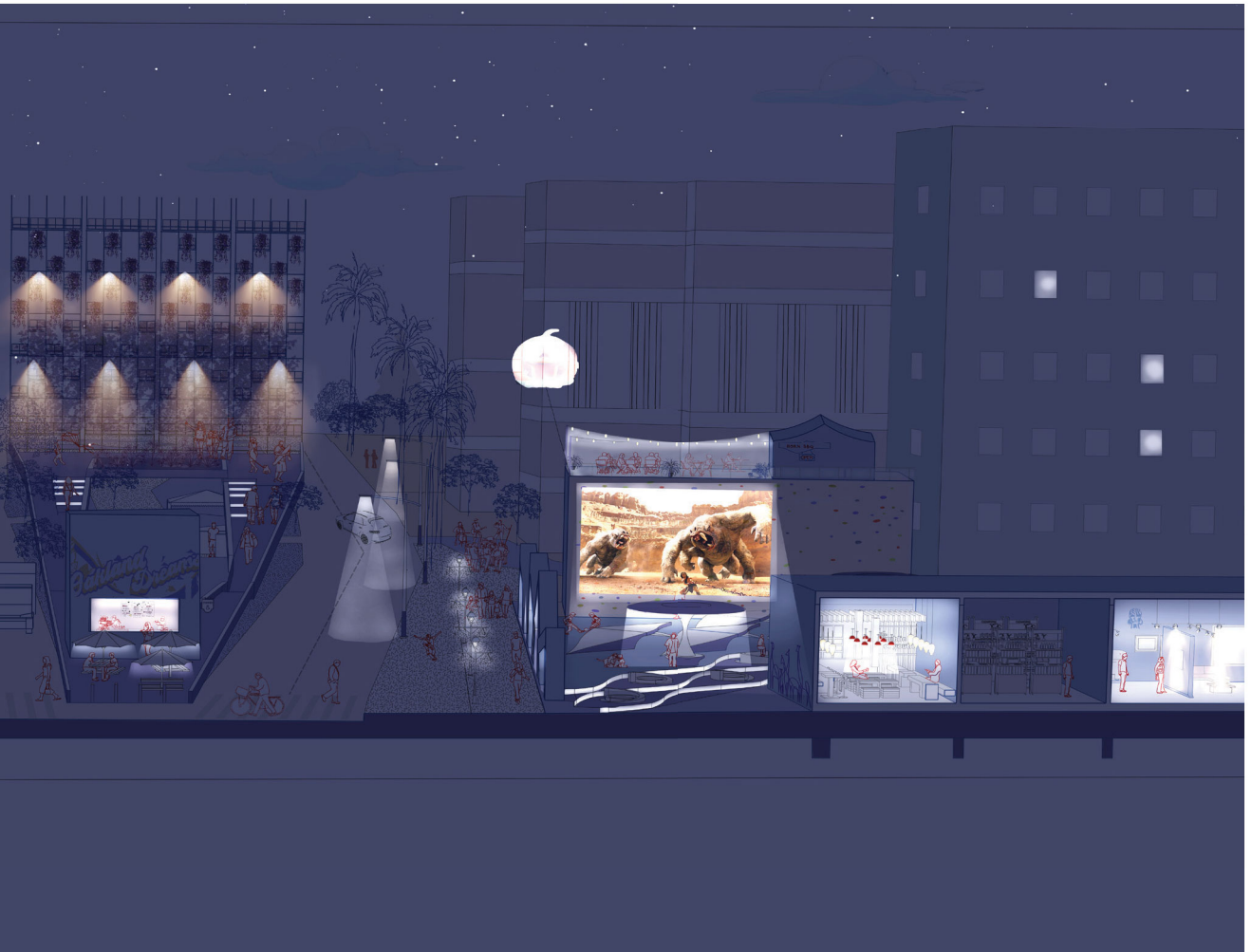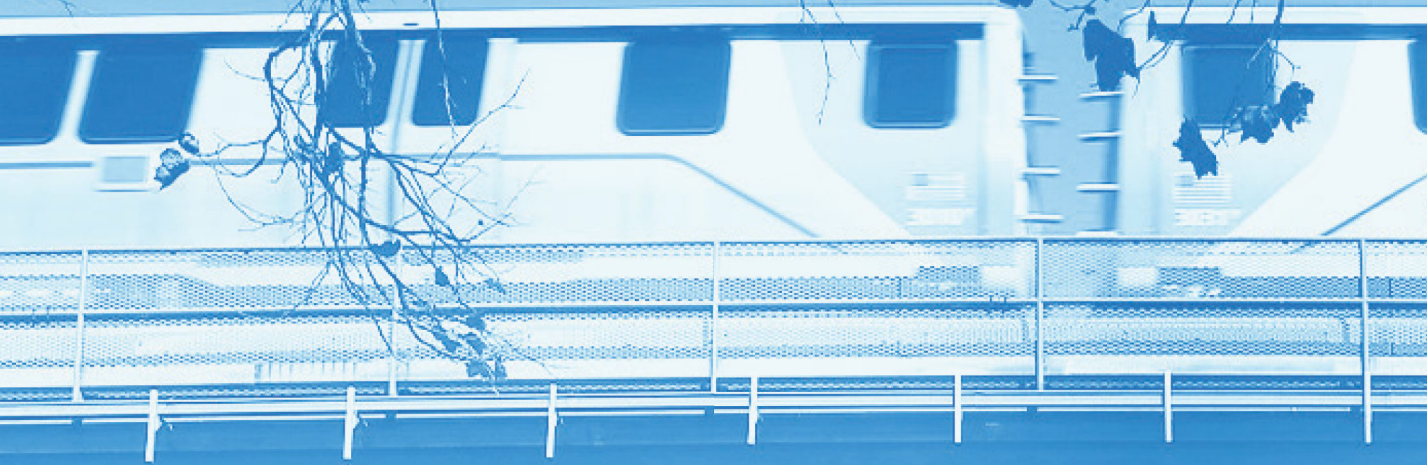
Esther's Orbit Room, Oakland CA.

Alleys to Allies

Yun-Yun (Nicole) Kuo

Once a cultural haven centered around the main street, 7th Street, West Oakland is now left with remnants of decaying buildings, warehouses, and empty lots. It is a result of not only the influx of money and people, but also the forced urban redevelopment and eminent domain abuses. The current major developments are focused on bringing in strong capital, which is likely to impact the existing communities which have been underserved for decades.

Inspired by versatile and inclusive spaces of void decks in Singapore and the concept of *The Kitchenless City*, where domestic elements are extracted from homes to the public for community engagement, *Alleys to Allies* emphasizes the mobility of the ground floor and making domestic services publicly accessible.

Alleys to Allies seeks to strengthen the community rootedness, manifest the rich local cultures and reclaim people's agency over land by improving access and connetivity. It will be achieved by redesigning the streets and creating new collective spaces that connect the scattered vacant lots and private backyard spaces.

The main goals of this project are: reinforcing food justice to secure food access for all; promoting community stewardship to empower the local's agency over property; and improving micro-mobility and walkability to activate the ground floors by weaving together the existing businesses and social infrastructure.

The main approaches include redesigning the streets by applying a road diet and transforming secondary streets into shared streets, to create a more pedestrian-centered cityscape and encouraging micro-mobility. Furthermore, improving connectivity between blocks by utilizing the usable private backyard spaces and connecting them with the existing vacant lots and implementing shared domestic services. The goal is to secure and strengthen the community stewardship while taking advantage of the influx of new residents and capital.

Alleys to Allies

Three Grounds Analysis
Site: West Oakland

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

● Bus Stops

COMMON

[Public- Commons Partnerships]

[Private- Commons Partnerships]

PRIVATE

PUBLIC

[Public- Private Partnerships]
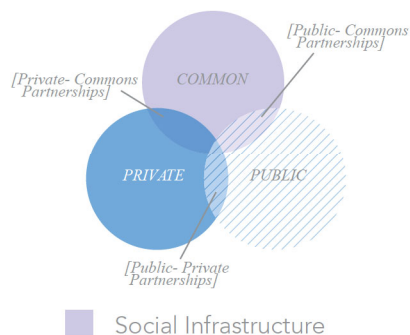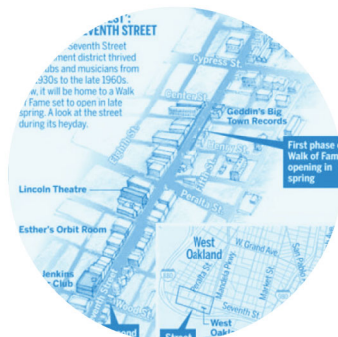
1 West Oakland 7th Street

2 Jazz and Blue Scenes 1940s

3 Slim Jenkin's Bar and Restaurant 1940s

4 Afrika Town Community Garden

5 Bike4Life

6 Mandela Co-op Market

Urban Analysis Axonometric, West Oakland

Prescott is a residential neighborhood and commercial district in West Oakland with boundaries of Mandela Parkway to the east and 7th Street to the south. The area was often referred to as "The Harlem of the West. It was once a cultural haven centered around the main street, 7th Street, where it served as a bustling place of commerce and offered a thriving social scene for jazz and blues, due to nightclubs such as Slim Jenkins' Place, Esther's Orbit Room and the Lincoln Theater.

Prescott, West Oakland Vision Collage

Food Justice
West Oakland 7th Street

West Oakland community takes several growing urban farms that can help with solving the food desert crisis.

Community Stewardship
West Oakland 7th Street

West Oakland community takes pride in its rootedness, which is also one of its greatest assets.

Micro-mobility
West Oakland 7th Street

West Oakland has a thriving cycling community that can help promoting micromobility.

Ideo-logic Diagrams

CULTURAL

COMMUNITY KITCHEN [1A]

FOOD TRUCK PARK [1B]

OPEN-AIR MARKET [1C]

CO-OP HOUSING [1D]

ENVIRONMENTAL

COMMUNITY GARDEN [2A]
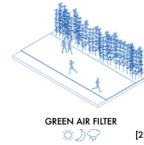
GREEN AIR FILTER [2B]

MULTIFUNCTIONAL OPEN FIELD

BASKETBALL COURT [3A]
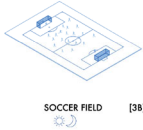
SOCCER FIELD [3B]

SPORTS FIELD/DOG PARK [3C]
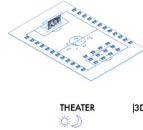
THEATER [3D]
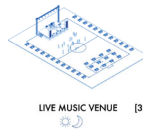
LIVE MUSIC VENUE [3E]

PEDESTRIAN-FOCUSED

WIDENED SIDEWALK+BIKE LANE [4A]

SLOW STREET [4B]
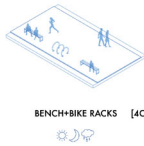
BENCH+BIKE RACKS [4C]

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY [4D]

Proposed Categorical Programs
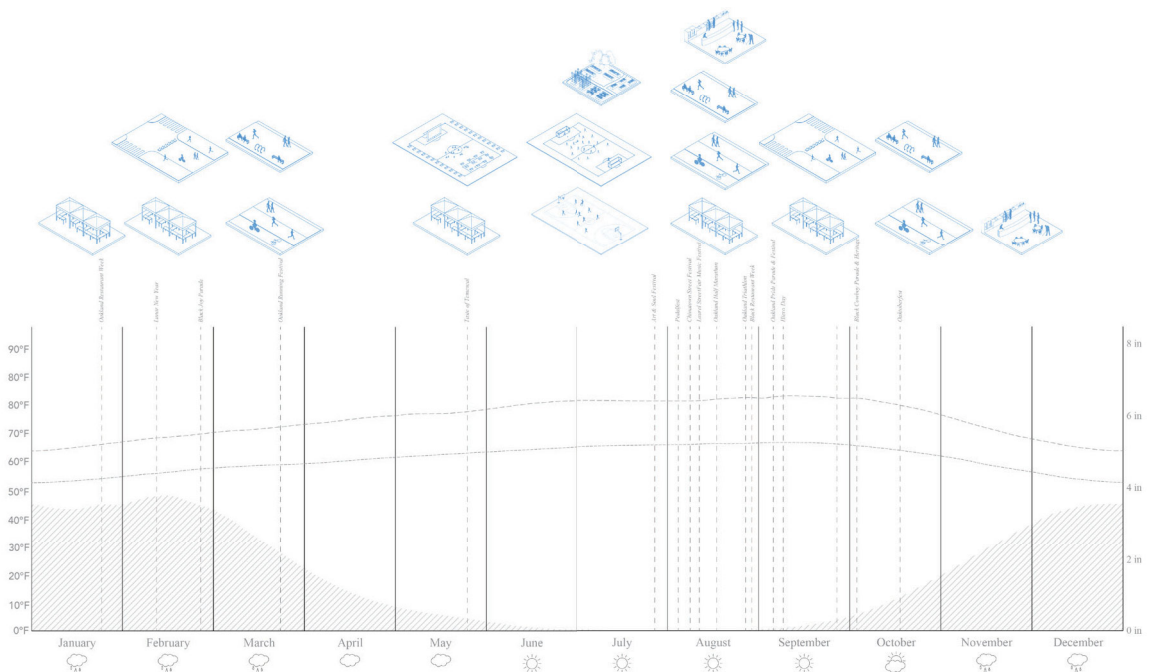
Seasonal Diagram of Proposed Programs

Concept Development

Our vision for West Oakland is to secure and strengthen community stewardship while taking advantage of the influx of people and capital. Each property owner has the right to decide on the degree of publicness of their backyard space and will be encouraged through incentive policies.

190

Alleys to Allies
Proposed Masterplan

Collective interior pathways
by merging private backyard

Commonin programs
along the corridor

Complete Street

Proposed Public
Library (now USPS)

Planned Project:
Mandela Station

CAMPBELL ST

PERALTA ST

CHESTER ST

CENTER ST

8TH ST

8TH ST

8TH ST

7TH STREET

PERALTA ST

LEWIS ST

HENRY ST

5TH ST

CHESTER ST

CENTER ST

5TH ST

1

2

3

4
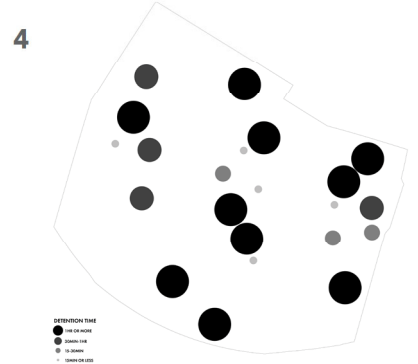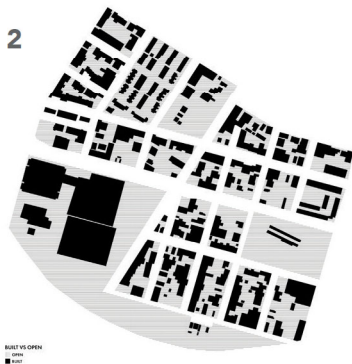
Spatial Mapping and Organization

1 Map of seven main blocks of 7th Street, West Oakland

2 Blocks: Built and Open Space

3 Residential and Commercial

4 Spaces of Gathering: Detention Time

Proposed Urban Strategy Plan

Legend

▦ Green Space

▦ Accessible Ground Floor

▒ Open Spaces

☐ Buildings

● Bus Stops

*Legend for Left page

History Walk

Micromobility Hub

Public Library (now USPS)

PERALTA ST

LEWIS ST

Multiuse Open Field

Urban Garden/ Communal
Kitchen+Daycare

HENRY ST

Section Perspective

Community Garden

Co-op Market/
Public Art Fair

Co-op Housing/
Community Kitchen

CAMPBELL ST

8TH ST

PERALTA ST

8TH ST

CHESTER ST

8TH ST
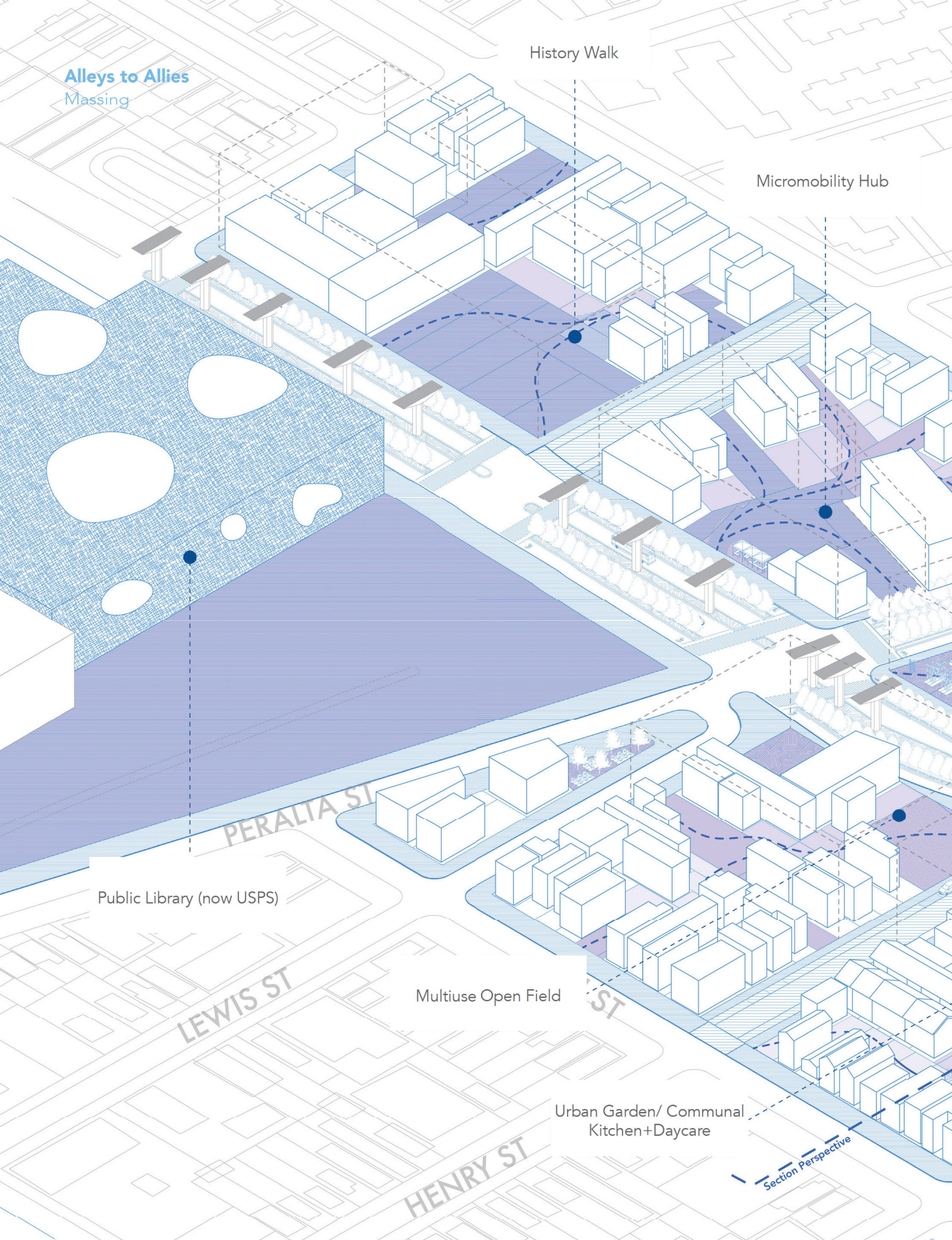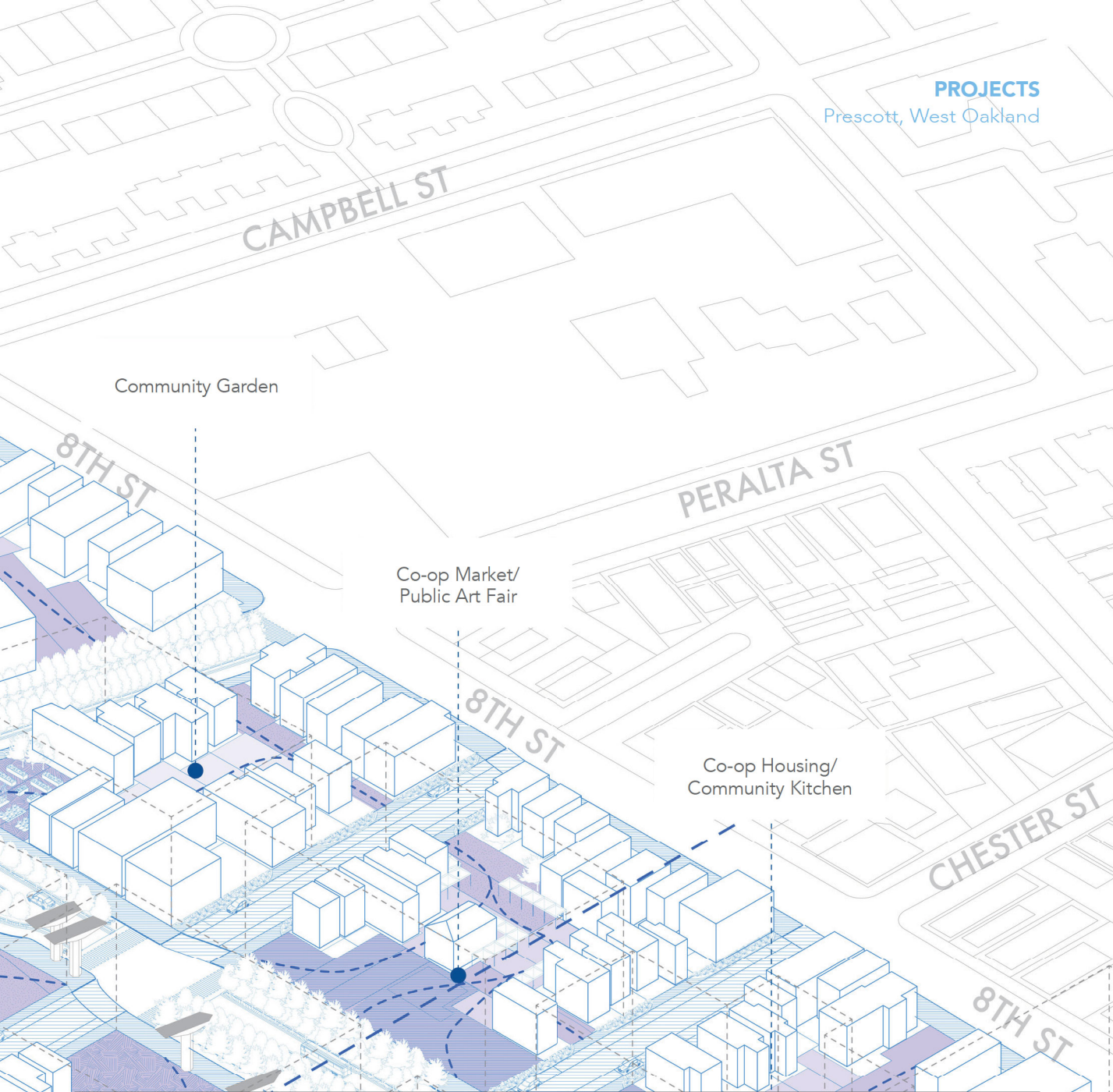
Proposed Urban Strategy Axonometric

This drawing demonstrates how the collective shared space can be programmed and used by the local community according to each of its neighboring assets. The Mandela station development is planned to be a mixed-use complex accommodating housing units, office spaces, and retail units on the ground floor. As many of the open spaces along 7th streets are parking lots, they will be used as the most public commons. As we branch out Within each interior courtyard and pathway, the proposed programs are made related to the existing neighboring assets. For example, the block next to Mandela Co-op grocery on the bottom right would be implementing a community kitchen on the ground floor and co-op housing above.

Immersive Street View

The three portions highlight different themes of the transformation of each blocks and the implementation of the proposed programs.

For instance, the current USPS distribution center is proposed to be transformed into a public library or a knowledge hub that provides educational resources from physical books and archives to community services such as workshops and job training. Across from it, history walk of West Oakland serves as a educational space for the public.
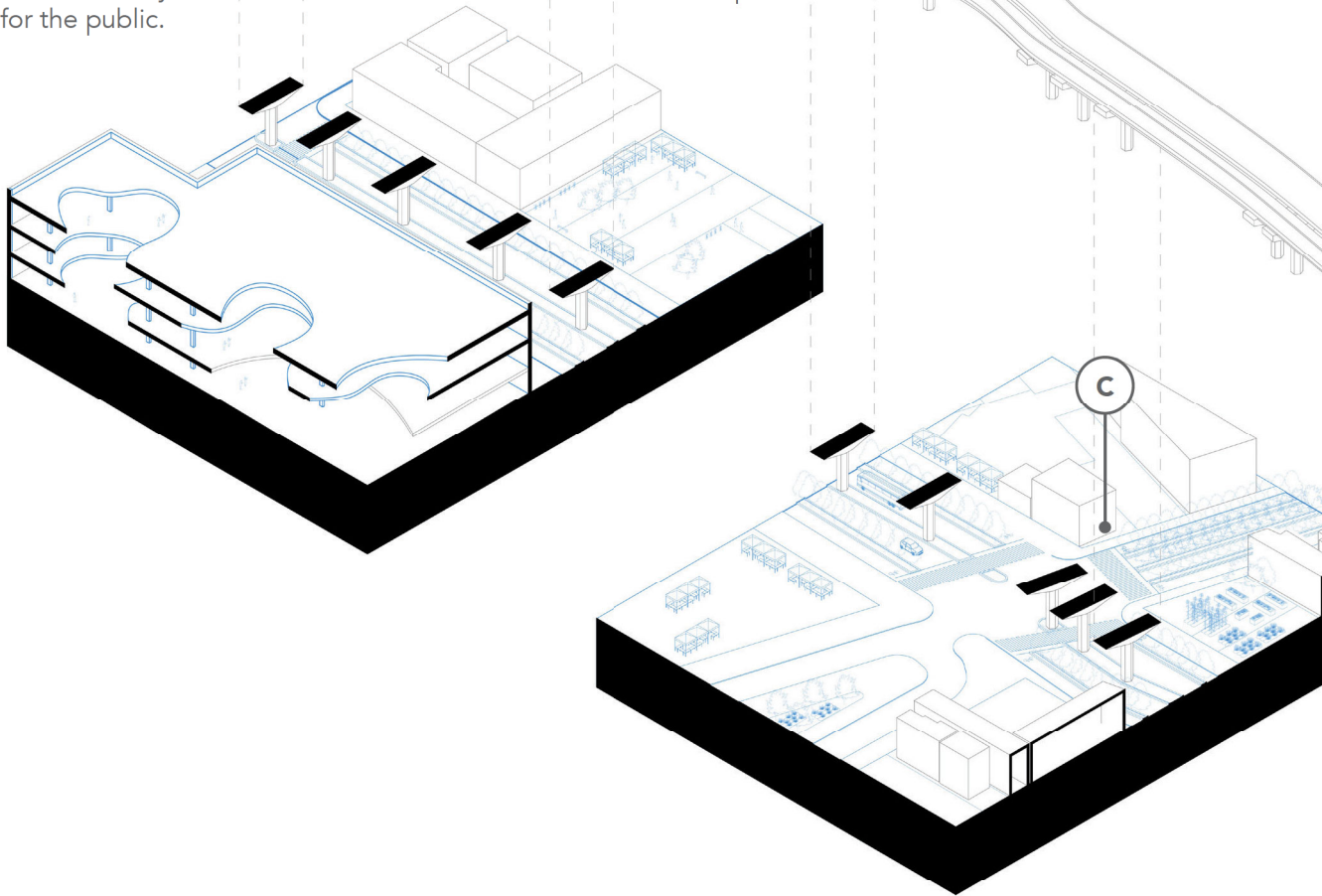
Legend

Social Infrastructure - Privetly owned Public Space

Street Realm - Pedestrian priority with access to Bikes, Delivery Vans, and Cars moving at pedestrian speed.

San Francisco Japantown History Walk- self-guided tour with 17 stops.
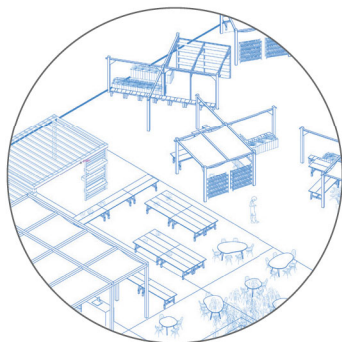
A   Urban Garden and Community Kitchen

Space serves as a produce resource for locals and community kitchens, but would also become a social gathering place with pop up events, such as workshops and tours.
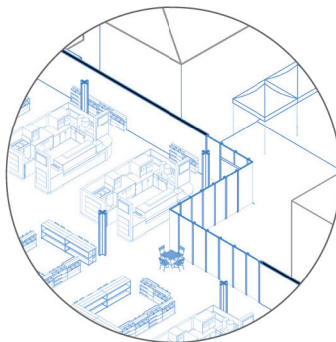
B   Co-op Incubator Marketplace and Pop-up Artisan Fairs

Marketplace and pop-ups encourage and support small independent businesses to serve the community.
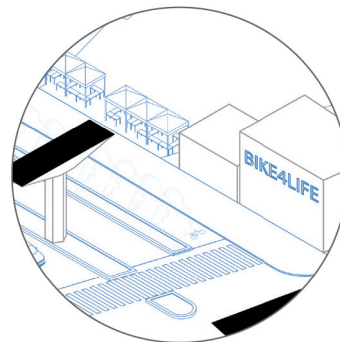
C   Micromobility Hub

Space for small vehicles that collaborates with Bike4Life, the only black-owned bicycle shop in Oakland, and promotes cycling and other electric individual vehicles.
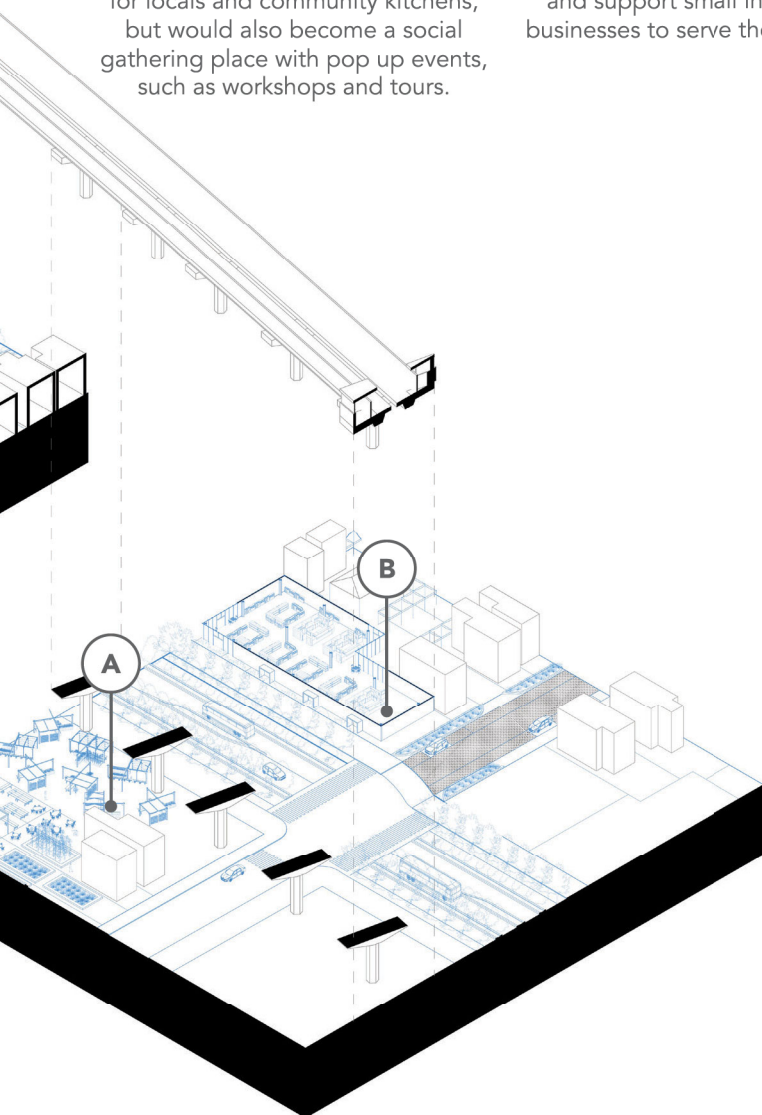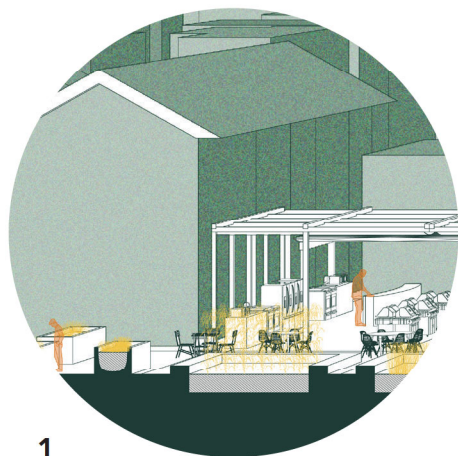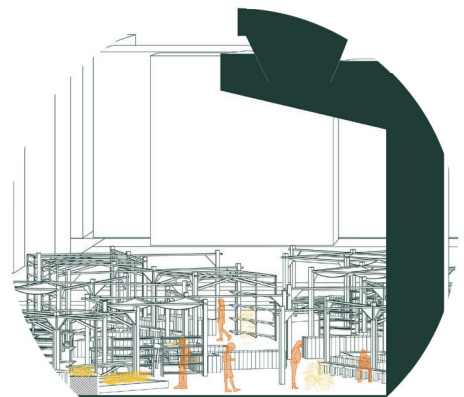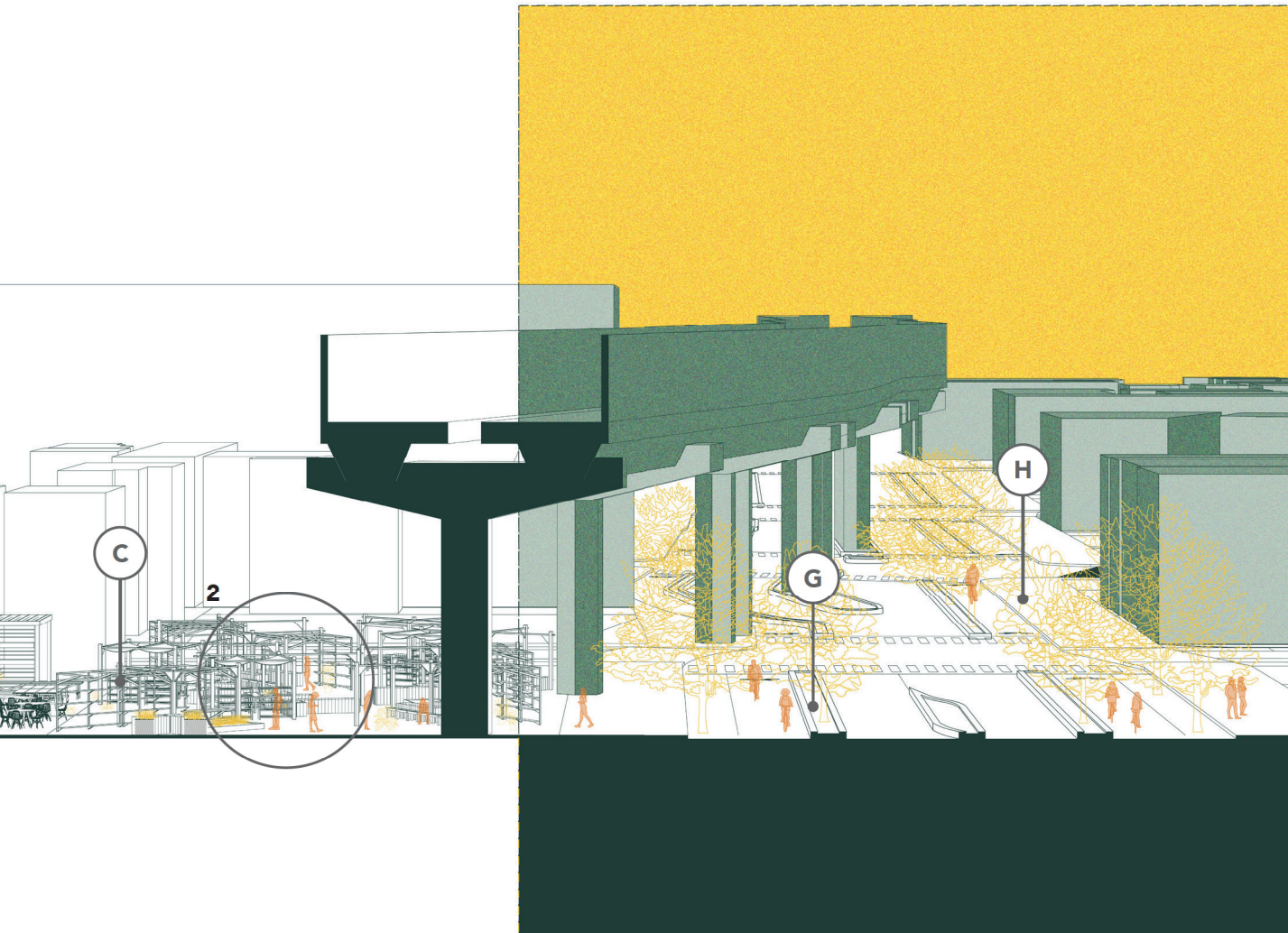
Section Perspective

A view that illustrates now the interior courtyards and pathways can be occupied. Starting from the 7th street corridor are the complete streets with bike lanes separated from traffic with landscape strips. Along the main street are commoning examples, such as the urban garden on the left and a temporal market on the right, which not only serves as a produce resource for locals and community kitchens, but would also become a social gathering place with pop up events, such as workshops and tours. Walking into the courtyard where residents begin to open up their backyards, it shows that neighbors merged their spaces to form communal services that serve the public and people from the garden.
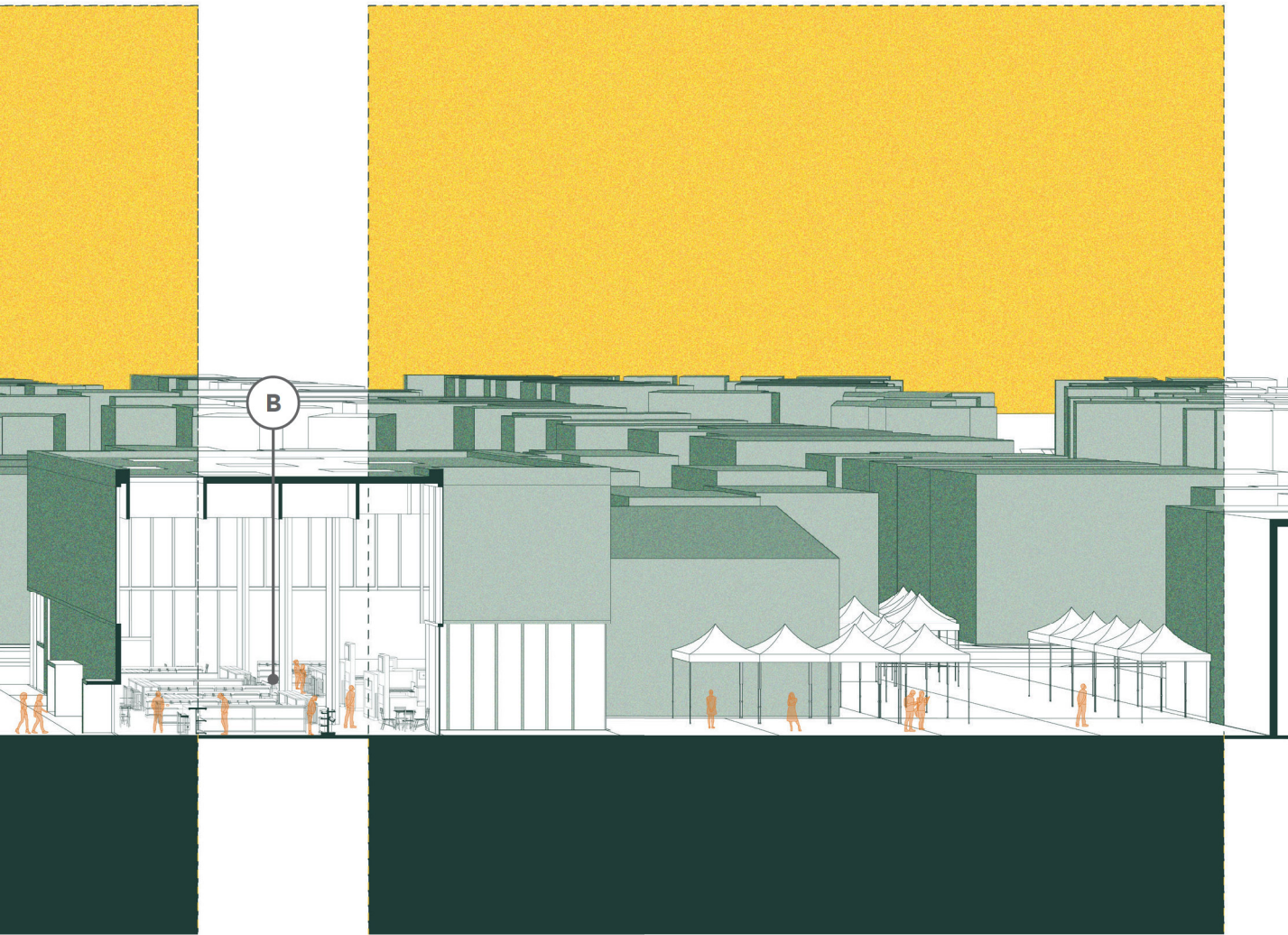
Legend

☐ Proposed

🟩 Existing Buildings

Ground Floor Proposals

A Community Kitchen +
Co-op Residential

B Business Incubator +
Temporal Market/Artisan Fair

C Urban Garden +
Temporal Market

D Kitchen Incubator +
Coworking Space

E Shared Backyard Kitchen +
Food Garden

F Shared Children's Playground +
Neighborhood Daycare

G Complete Streets and Shared
Streets

H Open Green Space

Proposed "Social Infrastructure"

By transforming private fragmented spaces into collective spaces and commoning domestic programs with the community, shared resources experience not only amplifies the interrelationship of the domestic and the public realm, but this project also aims to further strengthen the community bond and reclaim the stewardship of their neighborhoods. Individuals and communities benefit from empowering one another and forms without reliance on the state.

Harlem of the West, Seventh St., Oakland CA.

Seam

Geada Alagha & Lulu Wang

West Oakland is facing major development because of the new BART station and the new stadium, these new projects will most likely alter the way the area is now, there are already projects in action of new apartment high-rises that would potentially increase the entire property value of the neighborhood, leading to gentrification and displacement. Before the new development changes the land values, and brings programs and people that are foreign to West Oakland, our project proposes to prepare and revitalize the cultural "ground" of the area, by amplifying the existing cultural assets, such as communal and educational programs, connecting programmatically with organizations and businesses on both sides of the highway, and creating new values by multiplying the ground for existing initiatives for the community.

The heart of this project is to create an interconnected infrastructure that reduces the fragmentation of the neighborhood and creates social spaces for the community to come together. The existing resources that West Oakland provides for the community are prominent, however due to the fragmentation caused by the corrupt history of redlining and urban renewal, these resources are scattered and hard to reach. This project proposes to create a large-scale skywalk connecting the north and south side of West Oakland, as well as small scaled skywalks to establish a continuous pedestrian-friendly path throughout the project's focus area, broadening and blending with the existing sidewalks, seaming together the existing neighborhood assets.

The project also focuses on sustainable building strategies for proposed structures, supplying spaces for small businesses and local artists to thrive. With the skywalk as a civic overseeing platform , our proposal aims to convert the industrial edge of the neighborhood into a thriving cultural hub that celebrates the industrial legacy as the original economical underpinning of the local community, while enabling it to grow into a more significant civic core.
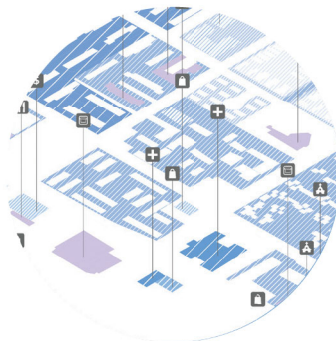
COMMON

[Public- Commons Partnerships]

[Private- Commons Partnerships]

PRIVATE

PUBLIC

[Public- Private Partnerships]

Social Infrastructure

Most Private (4)

Private (3)

Private (2)

Least Private (1)

Most Public (4)

Public (3)

Public (2)

Least Public (1)

Green Space

Open Spaces

Accessible Ground Floor

Bus Stops

1 Common: Neighborhood assets

2 Common: Single family front/ back yards

3 Private: Apartment highrise courtyards

4 Private: Single family front/ back yards

5 Public: Accessibility in parking lots/empty lots

6 Public: Accessibility of public infrastructure

Urban Analysis Axonometric, West Oakland
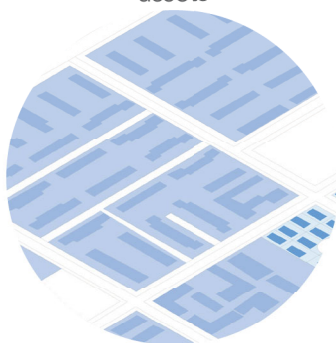
West Oakland is a neighborhood situated in the Northeastern corner of Oakland, CA. It's demographic is prodominantly African Americans, and has been suffering due to environmental and systematic racism. Non-profit organizations started by the community has been working to ensure residents' access to nutritious foods and to protect families from gentrification and environmental injustices.

204

Seam
Collage and Ideo-logic Diagrams

West Oakland Vision Collage

MAKING CONNECTIONS

WEST OAKLAND ACORN INDUSTRIAL

The existing resources that West Oakland provides the community are prominent, however due to the fragmentation caused by the corrupt history of redlining and urban renewal, these resources are scattered and hard to reach. The strategy is to create a connective infrastructure that physically stitches together industrial+residential, old+new, north+south of the focus area, and creating a visual connection by elevating the ground and programs, connecting existing permanent programs with temporary stands and reprogramming of the warehouses.

● ORGWARE
● HARDWARE
● SOFTWARE

WO neighborhood has many hidden gems, the strategy is to connect these assets to residents.

MAKING NEW GROUND

WEST OAKLAND ACORN INDUSTRIAL

The major industrial site has left the area with very few greenery, and a very polluted atmosphere; the history of redlining has also played its part in pollution and food deserts. The strategy to address environmental and food injustices is to work with local co-ops such as Mandela Groceries to create more urban farming, which can also lead to educational programs to bring awareness and job opportunities. The new ground is utilized to continue the legacy of Black Panther's self resilience and feeding programs not only on the proposed loop, but connecting the loop to existing roof scipes.

● ORGWARE
● HARDWARE
● SOFTWARE

Making new grounds to create more space and platforms for existing and new programs.

REVIVING CULTURE

WEST OAKLAND ACORN INDUSTRIAL

The existing assets include a diverse of mix of educational programs, healthcare facilities, recycling locations, design studios and fabricators and local supplying businesses. Opening up the ground floors of these spaces for workshops, educational programs, events, job training and career fairs is the strategy of bringing the community together and establishing opportunities for youth generations and unemployed residents. The cultural programming are focused on connecting education with arts and food justice, utilizing the large spaces of the proposal and making them more accessible through the new connection.

● ORGWARE
● HARDWARE
● SOFTWARE

WO was known for its art scenes and cultural history, the strategy to revive it will rejuvinate the neighborhood and community.

Ideo-logic Diagrams

CULTURAL

RECREATIONAL

ENVIRONMENTAL

OUTDOORS THEATER/MURAL *[1A]*

HOUSING *[2A]*

SKYWALKS *[2B]*

URBAN FARMS/GARDENS *[3A]*

TEMPORARY MARKET *[1B]*

CLOSED-OFF STREETS *[2C]*

SPORTS FIELDS *[2D]*

RECYCLED BUILDING MATERIALS *[3B]*

PERFORMANCE STAGE *[1C]*

PLAYGROUNDS *[2E]*

PARKS *[2F]*

STORM WATER COLLECTOR *[3C]*

OPEN COMMUNAL KITCHEN *[1D]*

TEMPORARY FOOD STANDS *[1E]*

West Oakland Program Typology & Schedule

Study Model 1, Plug- ins   Study Model 2, Modules

Study Models and Concept Development

The project's vision is to create an environment where everyday life is visible - where the community can see itself, get together, learn from each other and get involved in social and cultural events/programs, at the same time addressing the urgency of environmental and food-access injustices that have long tormented West Oakland.

206

1

2

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4
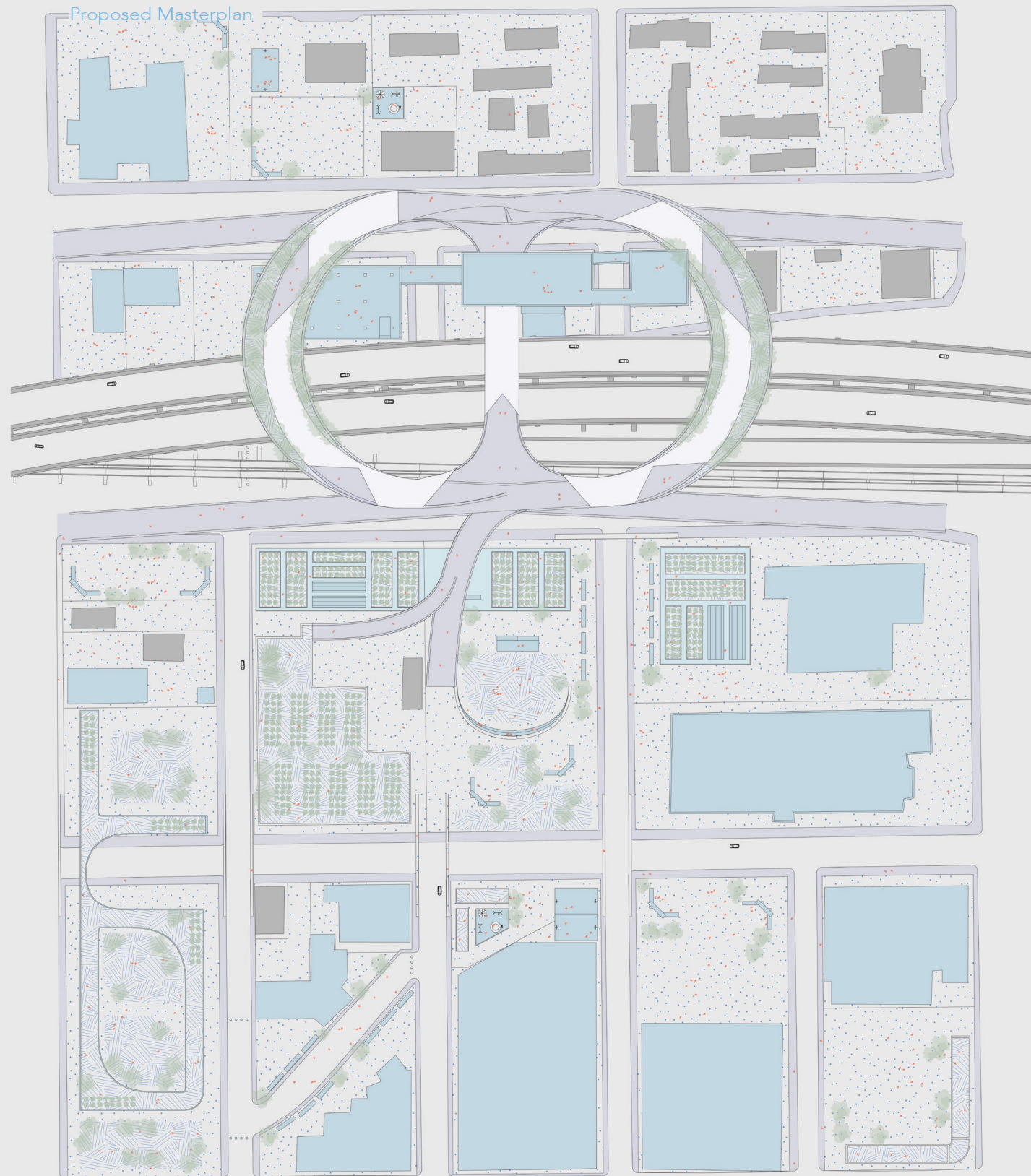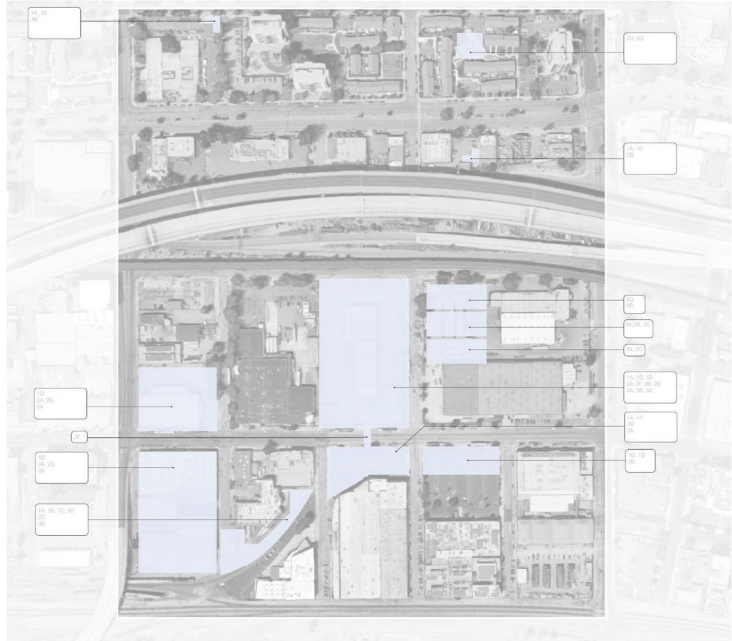
Spatial Mapping and Organization

1 Areas for proposed programs & infrastructures

2 Lose Grid: Public Streets, Roads, Highways

3 Open Cluster: Unaccessibile

4 Uneven Block Composition: Old Housing vs. New Highrise

Proposed Urban Strategy Plan

Legend

Green Space

Open Spaces

Bus Stops

Streets/Highway/ BART

Buildings

Buildings w/ Open GF
↳ Not Open to Public

Walkable Ground Floors (GF)

Existing Structures

Proposed Buildings

*Legend for Left page

St Mark Christian Methodist Episcopal church
Pentecostal House of Truth
5 Keys Charter School
Salam Halal Market+ Restaurant

As-Salam Mosque
Zoo Lab
West Oakland Health Council

Seafarres International Union
Open Groundfloor: Job-Fairs +
Job Training

Green Planet 21
Open Groundfloor: Environmenal
Justice Education
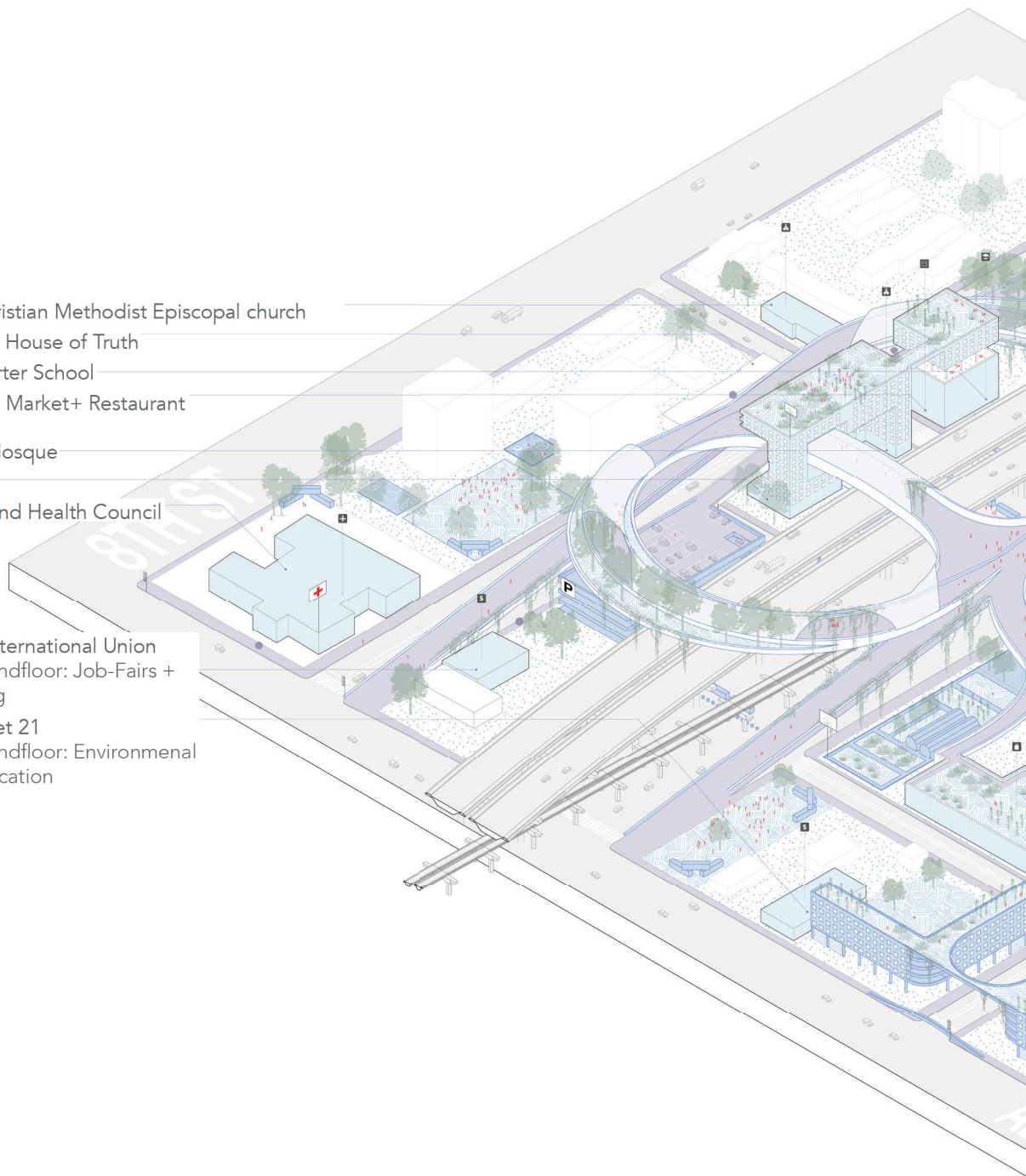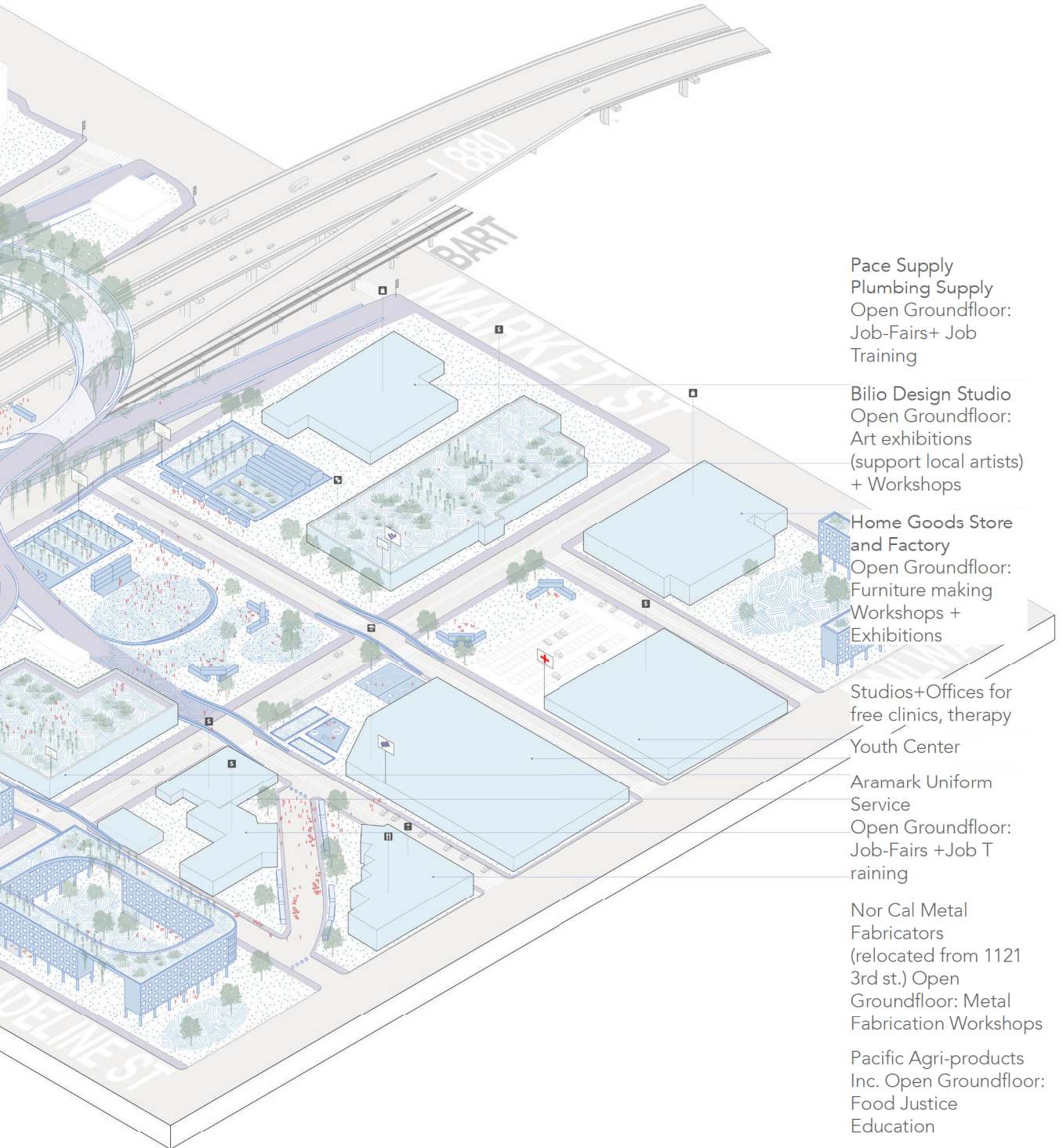
Pace Supply
Plumbing Supply
Open Groundfloor:
Job-Fairs+ Job
Training

Bilio Design Studio
Open Groundfloor:
Art exhibitions
(support local artists)
+ Workshops

Home Goods Store
and Factory
Open Groundfloor:
Furniture making
Workshops +
Exhibitions

Studios+Offices for
free clinics, therapy

Youth Center

Aramark Uniform
Service
Open Groundfloor:
Job-Fairs +Job T
raining

Nor Cal Metal
Fabricators
(relocated from 1121
3rd st.) Open
Groundfloor: Metal
Fabrication Workshops

Pacific Agri-products
Inc. Open Groundfloor:
Food Justice
Education

Event Venue + Bar

Immersive Street View

The street view shows a section cut of the skywalk's various levels of usibility and activity. In the center pathway, it's used for a safer direct transportation, the wings are for hosting food stands and market places. The structure emerges through potential future projects, for structural support and easy accessibility.

Legend
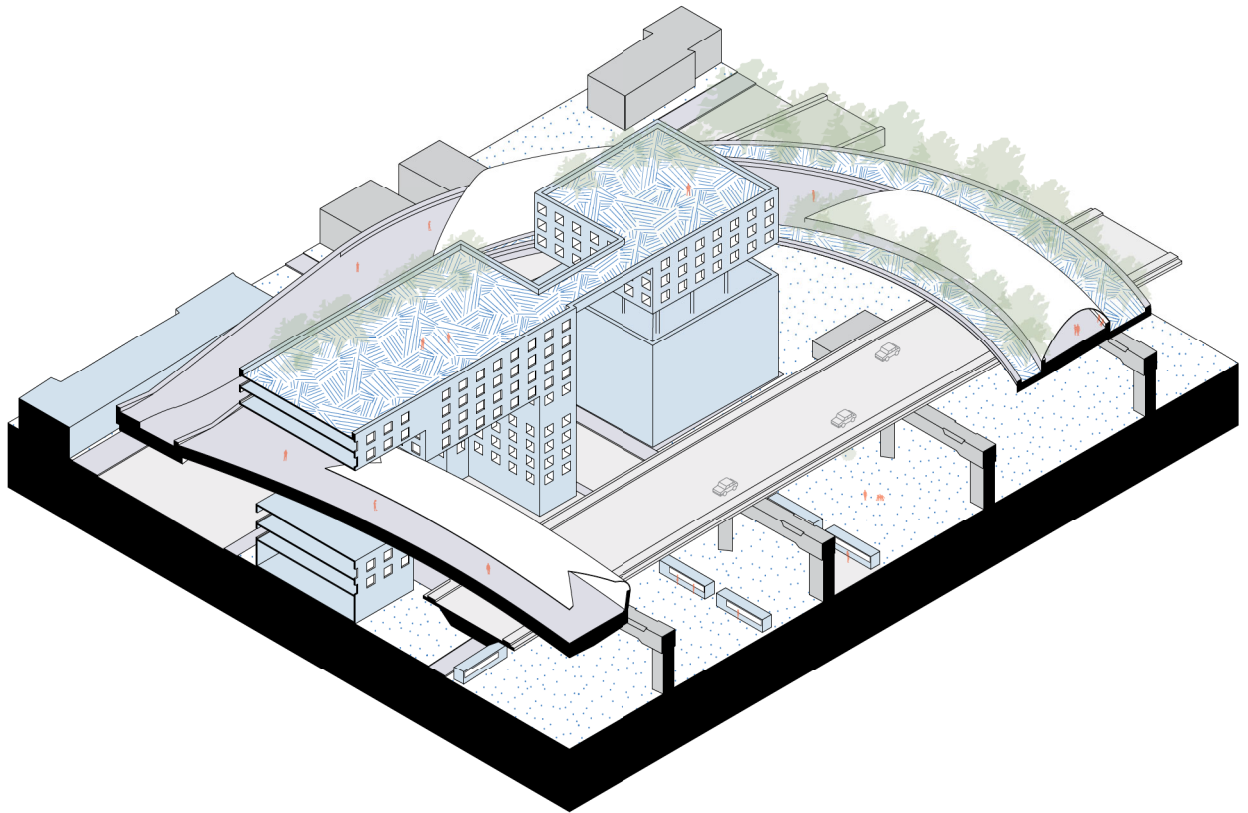
Green Space	Streets/Highway/BART	Walkable Ground Floors (GF)
Open Spaces	Buildings	Existing Structures
Bus Stops	Buildings w/ Open GF ↳ Not Open to Public	Proposed Buildings

*Legend for CURRENT & NEXT page

A   Skywalk

The Urban fabric of WO is fragmented, the skywalk will reconnect all of the resources in areas of need.
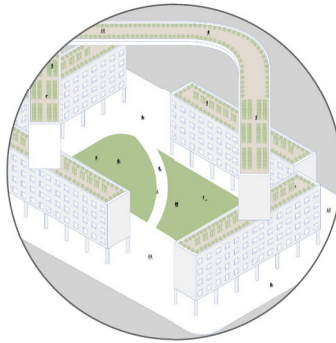
B   Affordable Co-Op Housing

A hybrid of residential, accessible ground floors and urban farming.
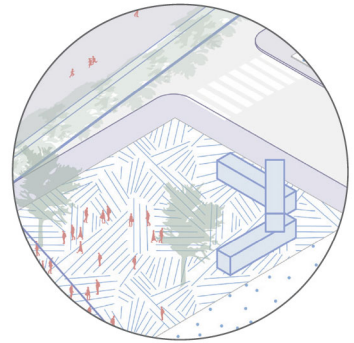
C   Small Business Spaces

Using recycled containers to create enclosed spaces supporting small business owners and open kitchens, also creating more intimate social spaces.
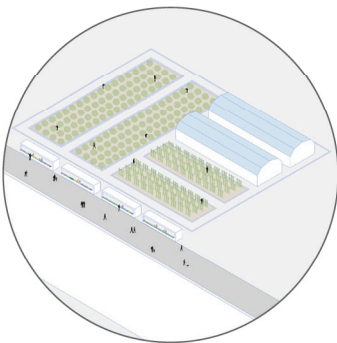
D   Urban Farms

In areas of vacant or open unused lots, available for community members to grow crops. It will improve WO's food desert issue and hold educational programs.
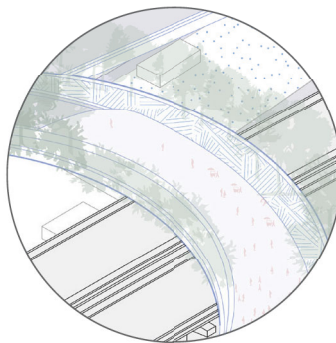
E   Vegetative Buffers

Large amounts of vegetation planted on skywalk and green spaces to create buffers between occupants/ users and airborne pollutants.
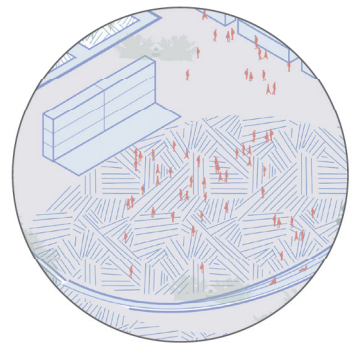
F   Local Arts&Culture Scenes

Recycled temporary structures are added to support and promote local artists, and to create temporary stages/spaces for performances.

Proposed Urban Strategy Axonometric

This drawing demonstrates the connectivity of the fragmented urban setting using a sky walk, which hosts temprory market stands, food vendors, and music and performance scenes. The sky walk, then, connects to a park/urban farm that invites the residents to gather and participate in social and cultural programs.
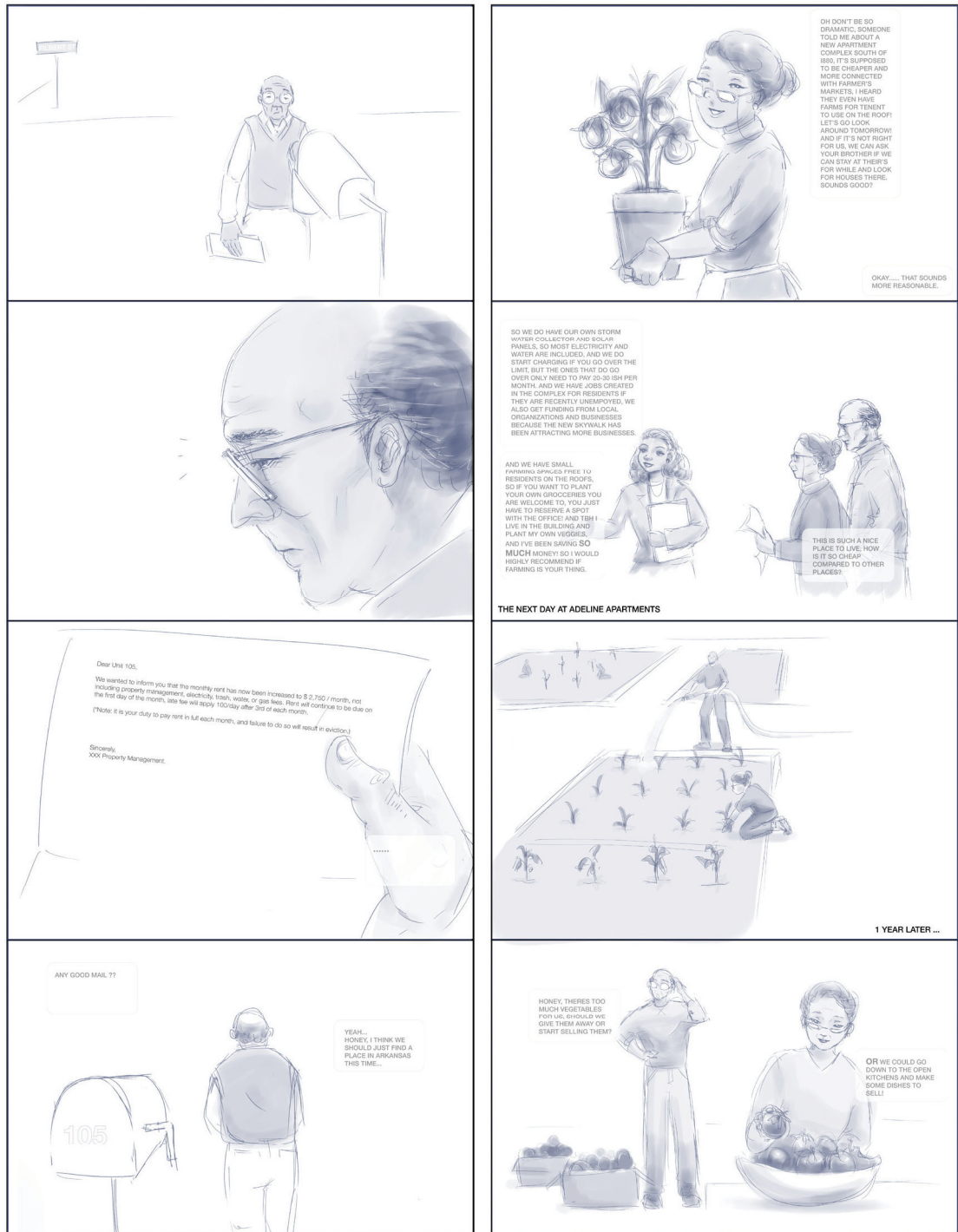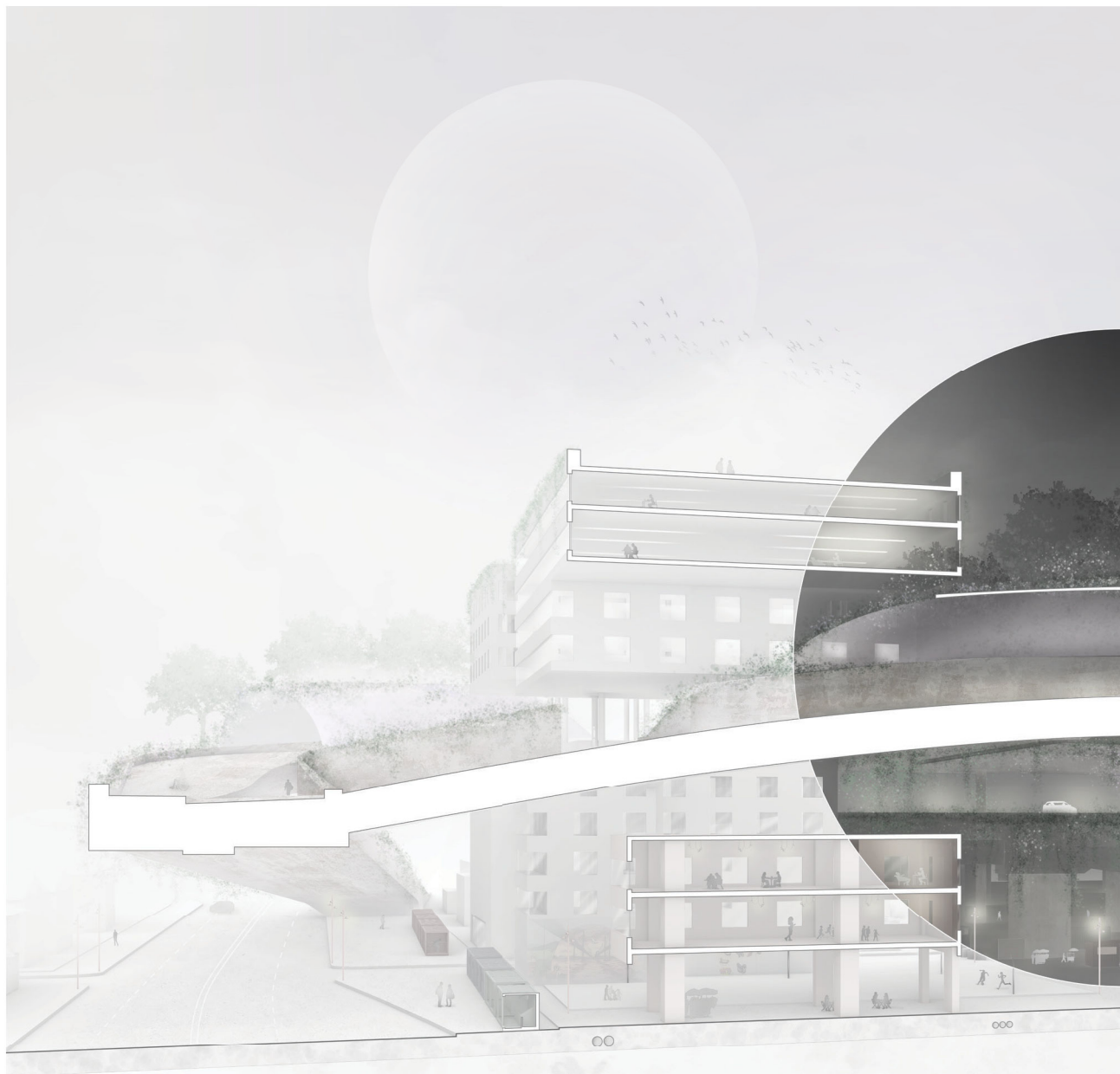
Co-op Housing with Rooftop Urbanfarm: Supports residents' sustainable living
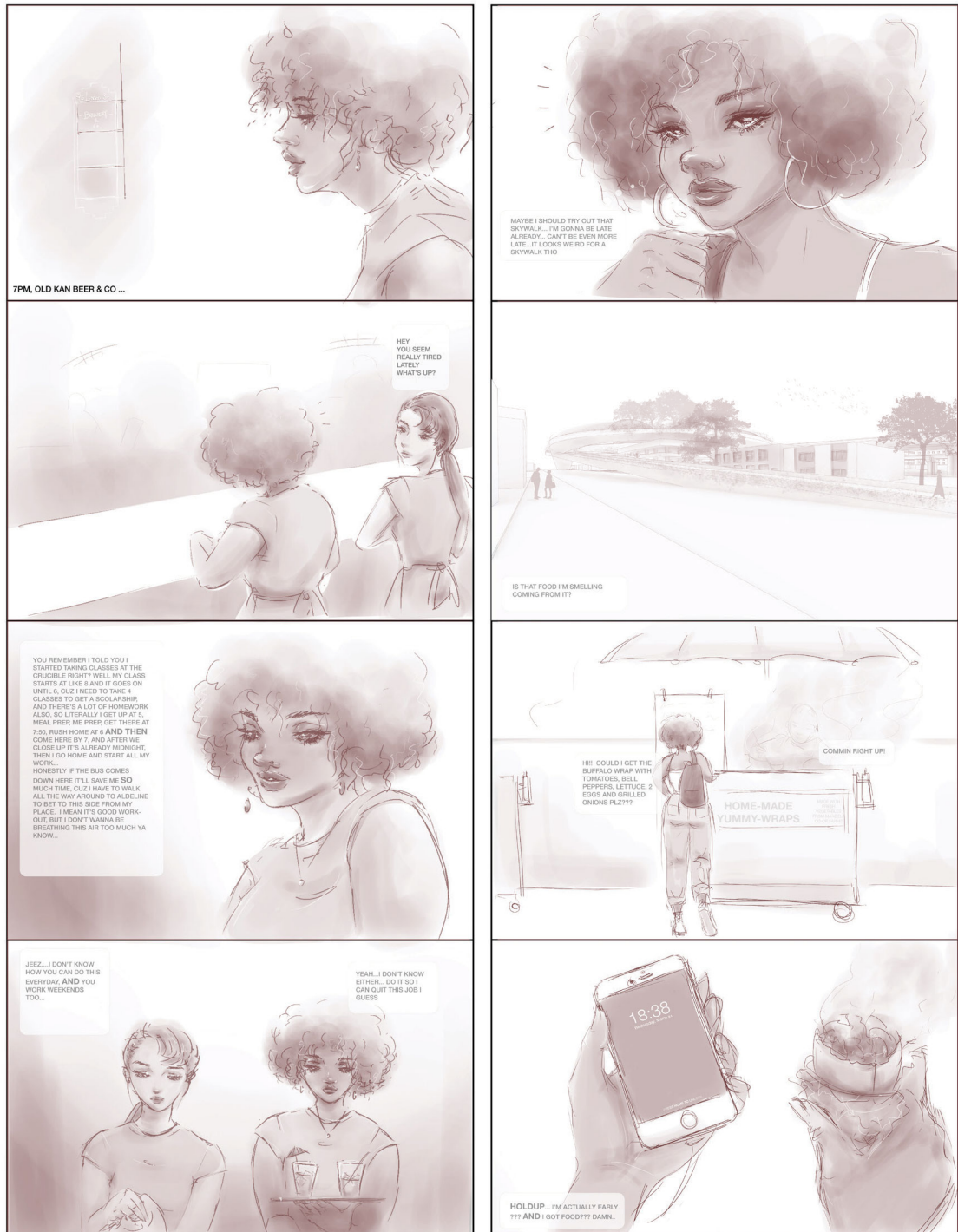
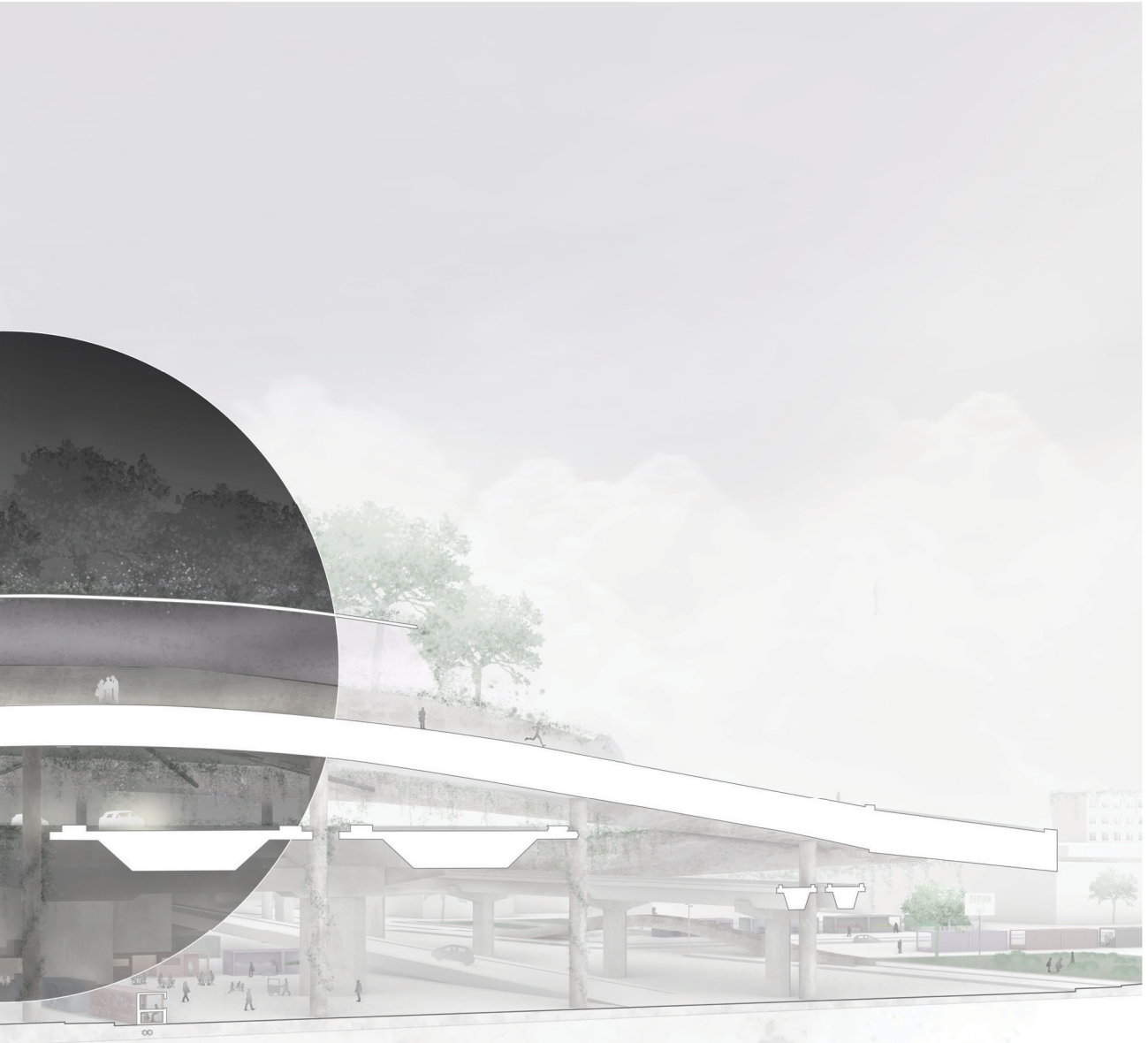Skywalk: Supplies faster route crossing I880 and space for small food stand and pop-up shops.

Section Perspective

This drawings shows the skywalk carrying temporary stands for local shops and food vendors, benches, and is equipped with shielding covers and trees covering the side of the skywalk to protect the pedestrians from toxins produced from the highway.

The street under the skywalk and highway is blocked off and the open space is used to host an extension of local pop-up markets and food vendors, to change the nature of the space from static to activated.
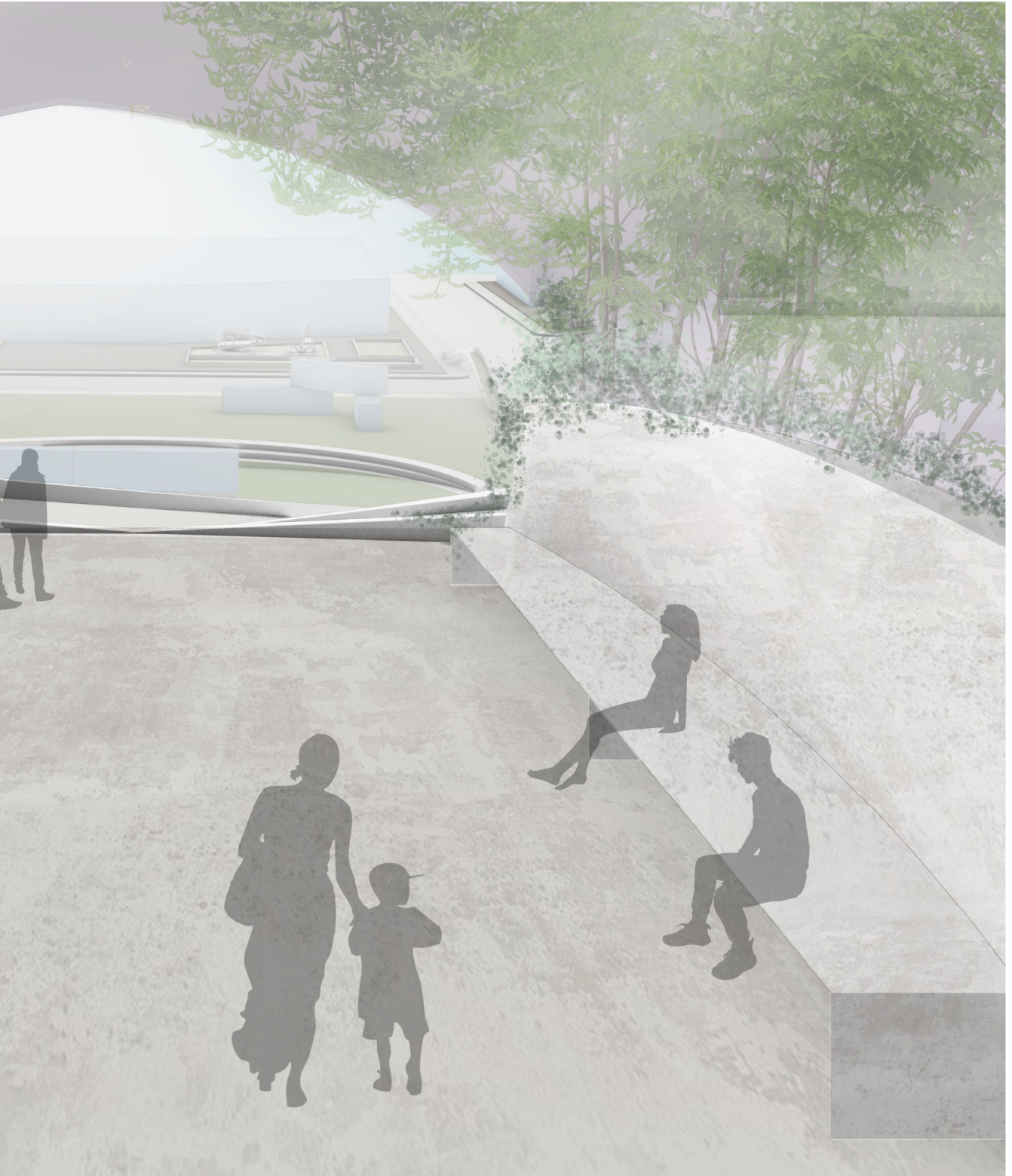
For instance, it is thought that justice is equality, and so it is, though not for everybody but only for those who are equals; and it is thought that inequality is just, for so indeed it is, though not for everybody, but for those who are unequal.

- Aristotle, Politics. Book III

Difficult Conversations On the Common Ground

Carlos Medellin
Assistant Professor at the Rhode Island School of Design

Different people in the same place are not necessarily willing to be in the same conditions. As we say in Colombia, "a veces es mejor juntos pero no revueltos," or in English "sometimes it is better together but not scrambled." Equality is in everybody's mouth, but practicing it on a common ground is still controversial because it requires everybody to buy in.

The past couple of years have made it even more evident that today's inequity crisis has collectively been built little by little, probably since Aristotle's times, through socio-environmental extractive practices. During the Coronavirus Pandemic, I have lived in Bogota, San Francisco, and New York, witnessing the rise of citizens' calls for justice, equal treatment, access to resources, and opportunities on their ground floor. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. asks for racial justice, healing, and freedom for black people. Whereas in Colombia, citizens are protesting for economic inequality and against the repressions enforced by the government over the marginalized groups. Unfortunately, these stories have become the common ground for many cities worldwide.

To approach such situations, here and there, the most popular answer that I hear is encouraging fairness, representation, and participation of different groups of individuals through implementing "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion." Governments are establishing

more "equity policies," academic institutions are building more "diversity programs," corporations now have senior executives for "inclusion," or in many cases, a mix of it all. But is it even possible to create a more fair common ground by implementing equity, diversity, or inclusion?

Architecture, urban design, and planning disciplines are attempting to address these issues through the practices of participatory Design (PD), or the approach of "architects/designers as facilitators." From the first time I heard about PD, during the 2010s, I understood it as a strategy that, at its core, is concerned with power issues. PD strategies, such as design thinking, Post-its, "Lego-serious play," and ethnographic methods are exciting new tools for designers.

However, through the various public projects I was part of in different contexts such as Colombia, Suriname, Panama, and Kosovo, I realized that applying these strategies in practice was complex because they required considerable logistics, time investment, and listening and talking to people, which was never explicitly accepted in architectural practice.

The first challenge was to convince the clients to extend the project's timeframe to include the PD element because, of course, time is money. But then, the biggest struggle was to convince historically abandoned communities to engage with the same institutions that had pushed them away in processes that required their time and effort. They often described these processes as "pure disappointments," "just paper," "nothing we felt represented with," or worse, "institutional ghosting." Building trust was difficult.

Those recurring challenges made me concerned about the general institutional attitude. But later on, I also started contemplating the possibility of PD's acceptance of complicated power issues that supported such an attitude. I became suspicious even about the very concept's name "participation," as it suggested letting someone be part of something, implying ownership over shared situations, projects, places, or grounds. Although it was supposed to be a collective discovery practice to include under-acknowledged ideas and bring diverse perspectives, it felt very hierarchical. In the end, the processes were under the control of the managers and experts (designers/social scientists) of the initiatives.

To illustrate my concern, suppose that the PD facilitators would focus on understanding the context, social structures, relationships, and power dynamics between the participants and their environment to propose a common ground for co-creation. Still, those same structures exist between facilitators, decision-makers, and the studied communities, and of course, influence the

projects. Moreover, those power dynamics get reified by the idea of "helping" and "studying" a community. So, instead of co-creating a common ground to design together, they divide "experts and users." In that case, there's a considerable risk of ending up using participation to support projects that have already been decided by those who "know better." Then, the danger is to impact a context and its inhabitants, reproducing colonial structures, especially when the facilitators are outsiders or from more privileged backgrounds.

Unfortunately, those tensions are often blurred through charming drawings that avoid facing complex topics and engaging with difficult conversations. Or, like one of my teachers at architecture school liked to tell us, "No politics at the design table." Practicing equity and a real possibility of working together on creating a common ground becomes impossible without the natural discomfort of having difficult conversations when sitting with different people at the same table, or even more so, when the parties interested are antagonistic.

So, if the intention is to co-create as equals, it seems fair to start by questioning how to create a common ground even when we are not on the same side of the pre-existing power structure. Following this logic, the first necessary step is to stop perpetuating the story of a more capable "hero" who knows what to do to help others, but to start building trust in each other's capacities, recognizing our differences and expectations. **Now I understand that designing a new ground floor requires the personal effort of challenging narratives and being open to unexpected results. In practical terms, creating a common ground means practicing equity.**

More than 2,300 years ago, Aristotle's writings about politics drew a clear relation between justice and equality in a way that makes evident that there is no equality if there is no justice. Similarly, justice without equality is, in fact, injustice. However, this relationship introduces a debate about different governance systems, how they wield power and how the embedded socio-political values affect how we relate. Equality is then about sharing a common ground amongst equals that are indeed different. So it has to do with relationships, resources, access, ownership, decision-making, recognition, and of course, justice.

Participation can be a concern because it does not happen by magic, nor does equality. And, of course, it is difficult to pretend that we are all part of something - participating in something - when we are not equal. Or in other terms, it seems that building equity is not about a method or about "studying" other people's lives from a table or software at an office. Instead, it is essential to establish honest communication, take care of relationships, and make the

right environment to build a culture of mutual recognition to share knowledge.

Building a common ground requires always asking and collectively deciding: Equality of what? Equality between whom? How to measure it? Where and when does it happen? Who decides what it looks like? But, most importantly, it needs a particular kind of leadership to mediate difficult conversations and transform them in design. And that may differ from context to context and story to story.

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Page 141
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The Ripple Effect / Sankyuta Bhagwat

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Main Image: Collage by Author - Getty Images. Mandela PArkway, 2021; and Shutterstock. Aerial view of the last standing section of the nearby-demolished Cypress section of the I-800 Nimitz freeway, Jan. 11, 1990, Oakland, Calif. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

Page 170
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Alleys to Allies / Yun-Yun (Nicole) Kuo

Page 185
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Page 188
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Seam / Geada Alagha & Lulu Wang

Page 201
Main Image: Collage by Author - Found SF. Neighborhood and business block of Seventh St., 1940s; African American Museum and Oakland Library. Musicians Jimmy Buchanan (sax), Earl Watkins (drums), Eric Miller (guitar), Commodore Lark (bass), Norvell Randall (piano) playing Slim Jenkins Supper Club.

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Contributors Dedication

We want to offer our sincere thanks to all who participated in the *Common Ground* studio over the course of its formation and execution in 2020 and 2021. Through many conversations, walking tours, studio critiques, guest lectures, workshops, and other events, you all have helped us shape the conversation regarding the future of the ground floor. Many participated in our community workshops, generously sharing their expertise and perspectives based on both professional training and lived experience. Community leaders, representatives from design firms, academic institutions, and the public sector offered their time by interacting with students, sitting on reviews, lecturing, and passing along sage advice to help further the discussion amongst the students, academics, and the local government. This course and the design research that was its outcome would not have been nearly as rich, meaningful, and relevant without your contributions.

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The Common Ground Studio

Common Ground: Re-Making the Ground Floor was an advanced urban studio conducted in the spring of 2021 at California College of the Arts, as part of the urban design curriculum developed by the Urban Works Agency in California College of the Arts (CCA). This vertical studio was composed of undergraduates in their fourth or fifth years, graduate students, and students from the Masters of Advanced Urban Design (MAAD) program in Urban Works. Several of the undergraduate students were also part of CCA's recently launched B.Arch Concentration in Urban Works.

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This studio continued a series of explorations on the agency of the public realm in claiming the urbanites' right to the city, following its previous iteration in Spring 2020 titled *Apocalypse Now! – Project for the Post-Retail City*. The studio was situated within the larger discourse on catalyzing the commons, fostered by the Urban Works Agency at California College of the Arts.

Community Partner Mission Statements

West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP) is a resident-led, community-based environmental justice organization dedicated to achieving healthy homes, healthy jobs and healthy neighborhoods for all who live, work, learn and play in West Oakland, California. WOEIP's mission is to build grassroots capacity to provide local leadership for positive change. Our work aids residents in understanding the political, social, and natural forces that impact their lives. We give impacted residents the tools to participate in these processes and to drive change from the bottom. https://woeip.org/

The Excelsior Action Group (EAG). Historically rooted in the Excelsior district of SanFrancisco, EAG seeks to develop and sustain commercial corridors that have been under-served in district 11, utilizing small-business capacity building, public and private space activation, community real estate and city liaison services, and policy advocacy activities. EAG's core mission is to preserve the neighborhood's rich cultural heritage and economic vitality. http://www.eagsf.org/

Japantown Task Force Inc. (JTF) is a new entity that was created in the year 2001 in order to continue the work of the previous 50-member Japantown Planning, Preservation, and Development Task Force organization. Japantown Task Force, Inc. continues to work on revitalizing and preserving Japantown, a community of culture, tradition, and history. San Francisco's Japantown holds a long history dating back to the time Japanese immigrants first set foot onto the mainland in 1860 through redevelopment in the 1960s, and up to the present day. The community has become diverse, yet still holds on to Japanese culture as seen through the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, the Nihonmachi Street Fair, Bon Odori and Oshogatsu (New Year's) activities. https://www.japantowntaskforce.org/

CCA Architecture Mission Statement

The Architecture Division at the California College of the Arts is an internationally recognized leader in architecture and interior design education. It prepares students for creative practice where material innovation and formal experimentation meet social engagement and cultural collaboration across four academic programs and four research and teaching labs.
www.cca.edu/architecture

CCA UWA Mission Statement

The Urban Works Agency is a research lab in the Architecture Division at the California College Of the Arts in San Francisco that leverages architectural design to affect social justice, ecological vitality, and economic resilience. UWA works with interdisciplinary partners to produce original research and design projects at architectural and urban scales. We also lead curriculum and a post-profressional degree program at CCA, where we host symposia, design studios, and seminars that engage students as active agents in dialog with the entrepreneurial and counter-cultural legacies of the Bay Area.
www.urbanworks.cca.edu

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